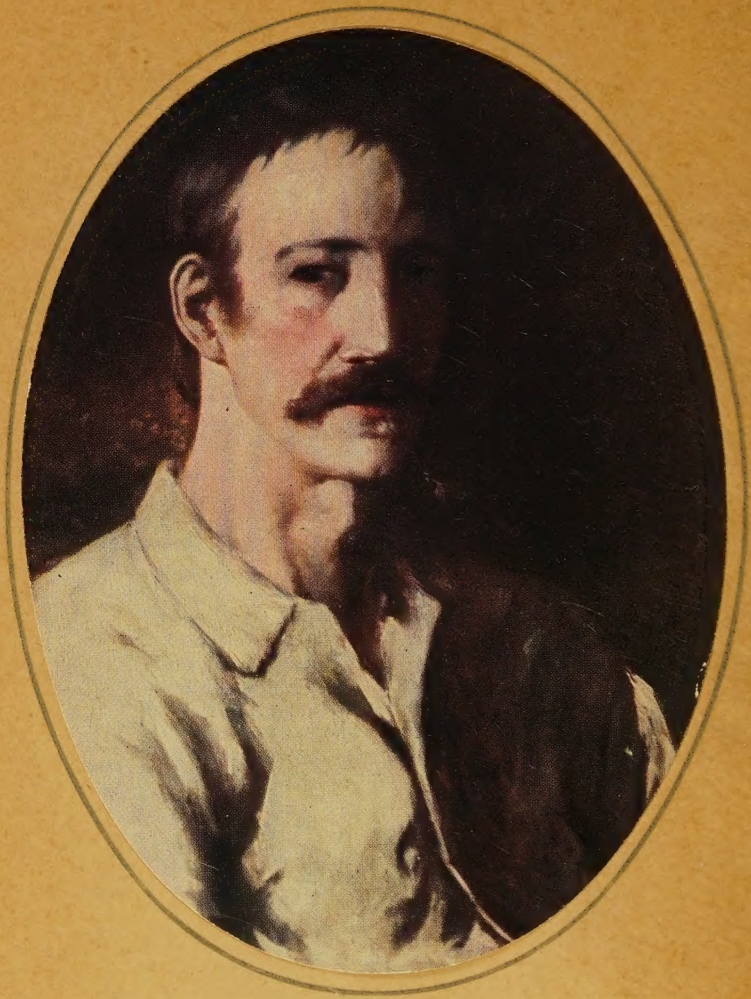
THE R.L. STEVENSON ORIGINALS

by E.B. SIMPSON

THE STEVENSON ORIGINALS



R. L. S.
From a painting by Count Nerli. By kind permission of the Honourable Lord Guthrie

THE ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON ORIGINALS

By E. BLANTYRE SIMPSON

NEW YORK:
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
153 FIFTH AVENUE

First Edition published in 1913

PRINTED BY NEILL AND CO., LTD., EDINBURGH.

PREFACE

Though R. L. S. left no lengthy autobiography, throughout all his works are legible signposts which point to his routes through life. They show what pegs he hung his fanciful thoughts on, from what source he drew his characters in fiction. To those who have written of him I am deeply indebted. To Sir Arthur Pinero for his lecture on R. L. S. as a dramatist, which he afterwards privately printed, and has kindly allowed me to quote. I have to thank the editor of *Chambers's Journal* for granting leave to quote from articles he published in his magazine giving glimpses of the author's boyish days and of his mother's home. Mr Will Low, in his *Chronicle of Friendships*, draws for us pictures of the two cousin Stevensons in their Fontainebleau days when they lived with Loudon Dodd and his artist friends. Mrs Thomas Stevenson's letters from Saranac, and on the subsequent cruise, tell much of her son and his sea travels; and *Vailima Table Talk*, by his stepdaughter, furnishes us with facts as to his mode of work when she was his amanuensis. The Appin murder trial, which formed the basis of two modern novels besides *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, is set forth in *Notable Trials*, ably edited by David N. Mackay. It tells us, without the embroidery of fiction, of the shooting of Campbell of Glenure, the condemnation and execution of James Stewart, and much about Alan Breck, one of R. L. S.'s truest originals. To Lord Guthrie, Louis Stevenson's fellow-student during

their legal studies, the publisher and myself are much indebted. He lives for a considerable part of the year at the Stevensons' old summer home, Swanston Cottage, and there has with persevering care collected portraits and relics of the author he knew and loved. He generously made us welcome to use his museum, for, with public spirit, he wished all to enjoy what has been his pleasure and pastime to acquire.

EVE BLANTYRE SIMPSON

THE LIST OF CHAPTERS

I. THE GOLDEN AGE . . . . *page* 3

II. MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS . . . 33

III. COMRADES AND CANOES 63

IV. DRAMA AND DOUBLES 95

V. OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY . . 123

VI. SOUTH SEAS AND THE MAGNETIC NORTH 153

VII. HILLS OF HOME 179

THE LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

R. L. S. . . . . *frontispiece*

From a painting by Count Nerli. By kind permission of the Honourable Lord Guthrie

Letter from Mrs R. L. Stevenson to Lord Guthrie . *page* x

Rev. Lewis Balfour, D.D. "A herd of men" . 4

R. L. S. aged Four 8

No. 8 Howard Place 12

"Cummy" 16

By Fiddes Watt, R.S.A. By kind permission of the Honourable Lord Guthrie

The Mother of R. L. S. An early portrait . . 20

From a painting by Arch. Dumòreck

Miss Jane Whyte Balfour, "Chief of our Aunts" . 24

Dr George Balfour 28

Colinton Manse 32

"The Roaring Shepherd's Cottage," Swanston . 40

An Old Friend of R. L. S. at Swanston . . 44

The Swanston Gardener 48

From a painting by J. Rutherford Patrick

The Swanston Gardener 56

Calton Burying-ground, Edinburgh . . 72

Sir Walter Simpson, Bart. 80

W. E. Henley 96

By kind permission of Mrs Henley

The Shop in Leith Walk where "Penny plain, Twopence coloured" were bought . . . 100

"Pool of that nameless trickle, where I loved to sit and make bad verses" 104

Deacon Brodie 112

THE LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The House at Vailima . . . *page* 130

Letter from R. L. S. to "Cummy" . . . 136

William Grant, Lord Prestongrange . . 144

Thomas Stevenson, Father of R. L. S. . . 160

Mrs Thomas Stevenson 168

Swanston Cottage 172

Land Ho! 176

On Board the "Equator" 184

Lord Braxfield 192

From a painting by Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A. By kind permission of the Faculty of Advocates

Letter from R. L. S. to "Cummy" . . . 200

The Pentland Hills from Fairmilehead. "Hills of Home" 208

The portrait of Sons by Herb I do not like. It was done under the most tyry conditions. The artist insisted, because of cross-lights, on having every door and window in the room closed, and the heat was almost unbearable, it being unusually hot weather for even the tropics. The perspiration streamed down Son's face, and I remember noticing drops of moisture falling from damp wisps of his hair. I am not sure who suffered more the artist or the sitter. I am afraid I did not help matters very much, either, as I

Lord Guthrie
13 Royal Circus
Edinburgh

objected to Herb's painting Sons with a "tip-tilted" nose like the artist's own. The nose was changed to Son's more hawk-like beak, but I fear the portrait, in general, suffered. If the painters had only been willing to paint just Sons, and not the author of Jekyl and Hyde, we might have something that looked more like him.

I wished to say many things to you, but I am suffering so very much from the fatigue of my long journey that I find I must confine myself, at least in this letter, to thanking you for your kindness to Cummy. As to what you have done and are doing with Evanston, I offer you, not thanks, but my — sympathetic understanding comes nearer to what I mean than any other words I can find in my tired mind. But I do thank you most heartily for the letter, and beg your forgiveness for this dull and inadequate answer. Yours, very sincerely.

Fanny K. de G. Stevenson

CHAPTER THE FIRST
THE GOLDEN AGE

"If the clear impression dies,
Ah! the dim remembrance prize
Ere the parting hour go by
Quick, thy tablet's memory."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

CHAPTER THE FIRST

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON WAS singularly fortunate, for it might truly be said he was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. He was a welcomed child when he arrived, mid-November 1850, at his Edinburgh home where peace and plenty abounded. His parents showered a world of wealth in concentrated love on this baby who remained their only child. He could barely walk when the hampering restrictions of invalidism were laid upon him; "but sorrow," says Henry Van Dyke, "is an astronomer who shows us the stars," and little Louis, with eyes swift to see, discerned lights through the cloud of ill-health that loured down on him. His starshine took the form of practising the pleasing profession of being happy, and, moreover, making others follow his lead.

Though handicapped by sickness, he had a power of concentrating his thoughts into certain grooves where they gathered in force and eventually became as a mighty river cleaving its way through all barriers.

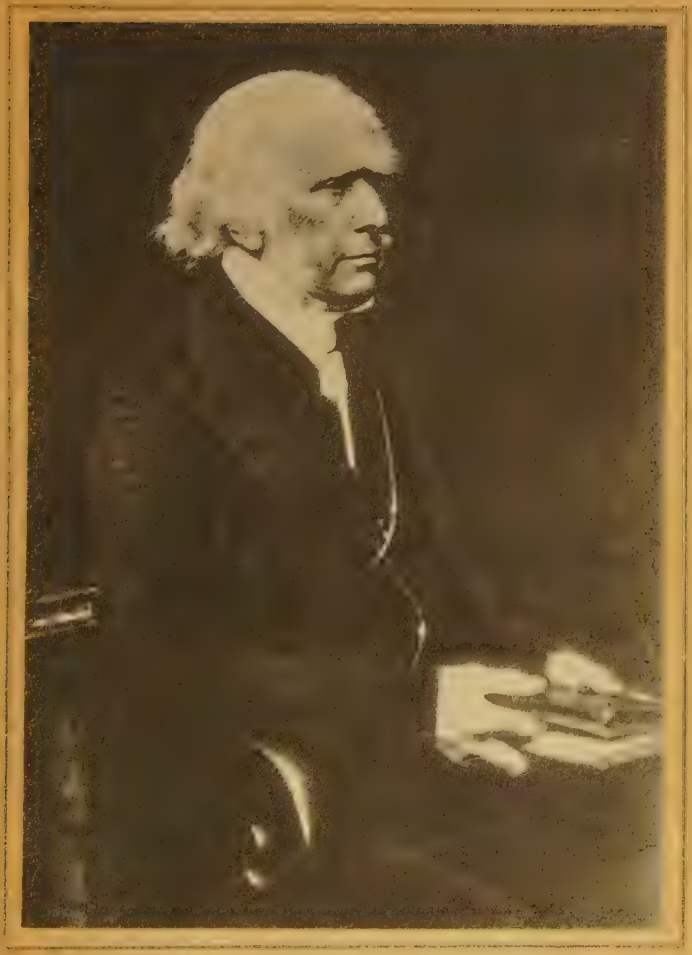
When a boy, he, like all others, thirsted for adventures by sea and among savages. Unable for months to be out and doing, he lay in the Land of Counterpane and invented feats of daring. In due time he realised this desire and cruised through warm ocean waters, jewelled with tropic islands. As a young man he confessed there were three things he wanted: health, competence, and friends.

He had all granted to him. An army of the friends arose around him. As the only son of a prosperous engineer, he had a fair share of this world's goods besides what his skill in words and industry earned. In the seductive sunshine of the South, he was able to ride and garden, live out of doors. It is "like a fairy story," he writes, "that I should have recovered liberty and strength, and should go round again among my fellow-men, boating, riding, bathing, toiling hard with a wood-knife in the forest. I can wish you nothing more delightful than my fortune in life. I wish it you, and better if the thing be possible."

Some well-known lines describe Stevenson's position when he stepped into the palace porch of life. They liken life to a game of whist.

> "From unseen sources
> The cards are shuffled and the hands are dealt.
> I do not like the way the cards are shuffled,
> But still I like the game and want to play.
> Thus through the long, long night will I, unruffled,
> Play what I get until the break of day."

With a seemingly poor hand he faced the problem how to make the best of it, and won. His victory was in a measure owing to his building foundations for his castles in Spain. So to speak, he hung prisms in his windows to fill the room with rainbows, and smiled on life till it reflected his bright-hued dreams. One thing which helped him on his journey through the world was the fact that when a child he set himself to master



what he calls "the *task* of happiness." He never faltered, but succeeded in the comely fashion of being glad. He went forward always rejoicing, for he had alert ears which heard the grass that sings; the observant eyes which recognised in even the city sparrows which chirped at the window of his sick-room, that evasive Blue Bird which in Lorraine is held to be the emblem of happiness. Maeterlinck has made the world familiar with this *rara avis*, the enviable possession which no money can buy. R. L. S. made others acquire the knack of attaining glimpses of sunlit spots where the Blue Bird dwells.

In his letters from Vailima we see how his work, of which then he was a master-hand, cost him throes and anxieties; though he confesses he was a rogue at egotism. All through his volumes he takes the reader frankly into his confidence on divers subjects, and his personal thoughts thereon. We thus seemingly know him intimately from these confessions, and best of all from his letters. These human documents tell much of the man; but the public, like children when they have listened to a tale that has pleased them, greedily say, "Tell us more." In fairy stories one can invent the more, but when we come to biographic facts we cannot, however many-sided the character, plentiful the records, give wings to the imagination. Before contemporary evidence fades, it may be well to revise the tablets of memory, and before

they grow fainter, take stock of their impressions of the author and his ways of work, who delivered his homily to man so well that he has twined himself about the hearts of all who open his books.

"I would recommend everybody to read not only the Waverley Novels, but Scott's life. It is in places crushingly pathetic. When you rise from its perusal you are melted, consoled, benefited," wrote Stevenson of Sir Walter, his great predecessor, the Master of Romance who was born and bred like himself in that city of the winds, Edinburgh. The insatiable inquisitiveness of the public makes them want to know what is fact and what is fancy in Stevenson's books. Though he went through life observing much through his almond-shaped brown eyes, unlike Scott, he seldom built up his characters on originals. When R. L. S. was learning to write he trained himself to take mental notes of scenes which appealed to him. He described them in words as an artist would sketch a scene from which eventually to elaborate a picture. Incidents another would pass by, R. L. S. noted. On his way to the lawyer's office in which he was apprenticed, he observes: "A small boy (about ten) calling out Flory to a dog was very pretty. There was a quaint little tremolo in his voice that gave it a *longing*, that was both laughable and touching. All the rest of the way in, his voice rang in my memory and made me very happy." It was not till 1885 that his *Child's Garden*

of Verses was published. "I am one," he says, "of the few people in the world who do not forget their own lives."

We see the truth of this statement in these songs, descriptive of thoughts of nursery days. In the first he went back to the times when he, like all children, objected to go a journey into the Land of Nod in summer, when the sun shone and the birds were still awake. This volume of verses ends with lines addressed to his cousin who had played in the old Manse garden with him, when together they journeyed to Babylon singing the old refrain which R. L. S. says only children hear aright. They wonder how far it is to the Eastern city, and if there is a prospect of reaching it by candle-light. His cousin Minnie, to whom the verses are addressed, had, when she grew up, to make her home in the gorgeous East. R. L. S. and she used to play in the golden days of childhood at visiting India by climbing on a chair and inspecting with awe a cabinet from that distant land, with "the bangles, beads, and screens" that were spread thereon.

The *Child's Garden of Verses* are a series of recollections of his youngling days, and, as he says, when we "look through the windows of this book" we see lingering among the flowers, playing indoors in the wintry weather, making the best of the Land of Counterpane, a chubby diminutive R. L. S., with thoughts and visions much like other

children past and present. Being the only small inmate of the "nursery clime," his own shadow and the kindly Unseen Playmate comes to bear him company. Of the latter he tells us how he

> ". . . loves to be little, he hates to be big;
> 'Tis he who inhabits the caves that you dig."

But when R. L. S. got other visible comrades he was pleased to

> ". . . build a ship upon the stairs,
> All made of the back bedroom chairs."

Travel bulked largely in his child play. Already as a boy still in frocks, the tune "Over the hills and far away" hummed in his ears. He had an infantine fancy for foreign lands. He climbed a tree to observe what lay beyond the enclosing wall, till he saw

> ". . . the next door garden lie
> Adorned with flowers before my eye,
> And many pleasant places more
> That I had never seen before."

Like all explorers, he thirsted to climb higher and view the sea, which was not afar off, from this cherry tree in the back garden of Howard Place.

In the verses we see the world in summer time from his point of view when his immediate surroundings sufficed for the vision glorious. He sings of "My kingdom" when he did not even lift his eyes to the Pentlands which overshadow Colinton. When still very small,

"I called the little pool a sea,
The little hills were big to me."

There he played at being a king among the tall grasses by the river's bank, which to him became a forest primeval; a few feet of ground, that the Water of Leith in spate had separated from the bank, became an eyot in the ocean sufficient to maroon a sailor upon.

He marvelled how the gardener could go on delving so steadily, never leaving off his monotonous work to play or to ride a thousand miles, and be back on the lawn "in time for tea." Plodding on the straight road, even as a child, was abhorrent to him. As a pinafored boy in a branch in the suburban back garden of the substantial small house which was his birthplace, he heard the people "tramping into town," and his heart went out in pity for them. Remembering how he had once found a secluded neuk among the broom above the road, he indited a few lines inviting "dusty feet" up to his retiring-room to dine on the scent of the golden bush he was hidden in. Maxims for mannerly behaviour were put pleasantly before him, and these he repeats in rhyme for rising generations to bear in remembrance, as well as the "whole duty of children" which new denizens of the nursery may repeat after him :—

"I am very happy, for I know I have been good."

He was taught to "pretend" to relish even unpleasing circumstances. He did not, however bit-

ing the wind, moan thereat, but made believe he was a Laplander, and he noted how

> "Thick blows my frosty breath, while
> Tree and house and hill and lake
> Are frosted like a wedding-cake."

The original of the playground for much of the *Garden of Verses* was the breach in the wall of the garden where the children squeeze through to go down to the river and hear the "moil of the mill" and watch the "wonder of foam" which was on the then polluted Water of Leith as it wound past Colinton, where there were

> "Happy hearts and happy faces,
> Happy play in grassy places."

These vivid recollections in the *Child's Garden of Verses* which form a bouquet of perennial blooms, are dedicated to Alison Cunningham, his nurse, who made for her delicate charge such a happy fireside clime. She came from the north shores of Forth, where beyond the great bridge the estuary narrows. She told him of all the tales of that west neuk of Fife from the far-past times when "the King sat in Dunfermline tower," and the neighbouring Culross Abbey was a flourishing monastery, down to her own recollections of a now-vanished Scotland. Alison walked, like Mrs Stevenson, four miles to school and four miles home daily, and finally became a weekly boarder at Dunfermline when learning dressmaking. When returning for week-ends at home she

used timidly to seek the company of the carrier's cart, holding on to the tail of it, afraid of the darksome roads and bogles. Cummy, for so her young charge rechristened her when he could lisp, may have thought her education finished when she left "the schule"; but it began anew when she read the long nights through to her sick, sleepless, fevered boy. On Sunday she restricted her charge to religious literature, but that was the invariable custom in Edinburgh homes in R. L. S.'s early days.

The delicate child was for long months housebound. Before he had troubled to read to himself, she untiringly, "in a voice so kind," read night and day what he commanded. She became as excited in some thrilling story as he was, for she was adaptable and sympathetic.

During what he calls his "Covenanting childhood" he was allowed Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* on Sunday, and his daily portion of the Scripture was so liberal that several times Cummy read to him the little Bible from cover to cover, a fine literary groundwork.

It took two devoted women to rear the delicate boy. They kept watch and ward over him, and so sentinelled the meagre measure of health granted to him that to their judicious defending care he owed his life. He was rescued from the dangers of over-petting by having from his infancy sickness for a tutor—a mentor who helped to ground him

in the grammar of patient endurance. He learned his lesson thoroughly, moreover gaily. "There is in the world infinitely more joy than pain to be shared if you will take *your* share when it is offered," says Ruskin, and R. L. S. eagerly took his full allotment of rejoicing. The solution of his infectiously gladsome influence is told in the diary his mother kept of his daily progress in his very juvenile years. When he was five she notes, "When I asked Lou what he had been doing, he said, 'I've been playing all day'; and then when I looked at him he added, '*At least, I've been making myself cheerful.*' Cummy helped to keep him cheerful, for she enjoys fun and a laugh, 'a jovial Cameronian,' Andrew Lang calls her." In face and in neatness of feature and in brightness of disposition Cummy resembled her mistress, so R. L. S., when but eighteen months old, truly found a second mother in the brisk, capable young woman who came to him from Torryburn to be the "angel of his infant life." Cummy had many old fireside legends to retail to her laddie when he grew bigger. The ones he liked best were of smugglers of spirits and of bodies. The resurrectionists who harried the graveyards by the shores of Fife, took their gruesome cargo across the water at night and drove them on to Edinburgh. Cummy's mother had grown up in such a dread of the dead being torn from their resting-graves and sold to the dissecting-room, that she desired in 1870 to be buried

in an Edinburgh cemetery and not beside her kith and kin, on the fringe of Fife. Cummy teaching her Lew to recite *The Burial of Sir John Moore* recalled the days when she helped the Misses Drummond, who combined dressmaking and teaching. The mistress, her head full of the gingham she was fashioning, taught her pupils that Sir John was laid to rest in his *material* cloak, and their whilom apprentice told this with a merry twinkle in her eye.

When Cummy went home on holiday her charge wrote to her. He dictated letters and stories to his willing amanuensis, his mother. Mr Stevenson's word was law to the petted child. "Jane sleeps in my room now," he informs Cummy in one of these epistles, "*because Papa said it*"; and in another, seized with a fear Cummy might stay too long in red-tiled picturesque Torryburn, where they heard the curfew from Culross ring out, he begs her to return to her little son. The love between Cummy and the author who still called himself when grown up "her little son," was a lasting affection on both sides. He felt keenly for nurses discarded and neglected by their charges; when he had mastered the ring of words, one of his early essays is on this theme. Cummy is still the only survivor of that happy early home of R. L. S. Despite deafness, she sees many admirers of R. L. S. who go to pay court to her.

"Such a handsome young man called to-day

and asked if he might kiss me," she tells. " I said to him, ' I wish anyone as nice had asked me that fifty years ago, and I might have left Lew '—but I don't think I would."

In the first volume he published he wrote in it a foreword of his dedication to the *Garden of Verses.* When ill in San Francisco, he had a letter of hers by him to remind him of the comfortable hand which had soothed his pillows in the long nights he lay awake. Round Cummy's own room hang some photographs of his parents, and various ones of "her boy"; also some of Mentone he gave her, where she had journeyed with Mrs Stevenson and Louis, when he was in his teens and his mother's health gave those who loved her concern. When R. L. S. returned there later in life, having been 'ordered South,' he wrote to Cummy, recalling days of yore and parodying the song, " It is no' our hoose, I ken by the biggin' o't," when he found the roads he had wandered alongside of Cummy were covered with villas. The last time Mrs Stevenson and Cummy met was when R. L. S.'s mother called on her son's old nurse. Their conversation, as usual, had been of their "Little Lew" of nursery times. Looking over Cummy's albums they invariably harked back on recollections of him in his Edinburgh days.

Cummy still wore crape for her boy, and Mrs Stevenson noted it. They did not need that outward sign of mourning : he was always in their

thoughts, but she patted Cummy's crape band and kissed her just before they parted. Cummy watched the car go on its way townward with moist eyes, and a few days later learned of her mistress's death. Mr and Mrs Stevenson gone, she remains the only one of the three who formed a guard, night and day, over small R. L. S. in his infancy.

Two others mentioned in the *Garden of Verses* are his devoted mother and his aunt, Miss Balfour. In one of his last letters he says he inherited from his mother a hard, hopeful strain. About the time when he climbed the cherry tree in the back garden, to have a more exalted view of the world, he, weary of the house, and too soon, even in the short wintry afternoon, to hope for "Leerie, Leerie, light the lamp," to come posting up the street to knock "another luminous hole into the dusk," sighed heavily, wished he were at his grandfather's manse, as it was the very nicest place in all the world. His mother demurred at this statement, for she explained the nicest place in all the world, *of course*, must be their own home. The child meditated over this and finally agreed with her, and ceased to grumble.

Mrs Stevenson, a few weeks before her death, stood looking over to 8 Howard Place, where she had come as a bride nearly half a century before. "Who lives there now?" she asked, scanning the two-storied house standing back a little in a small trig garden, the roadway past it making one of

the white arms which Scott says Edinburgh flung to the sea. The owner of the house heard her, and asked her to cross the street and walk in. Her host left her within the old familiar rooms. Her son's words she realised, in

> ". . . love of unforgotten times"

that she chanced

> ". . . to hear once more
> The little feet along the floor."

The lamp before the door is gone, to make way for an electric-light post. As R. L. S. prophesied in his plea for gas lamps, "in the twinkling of an eye, the design of the city flashes into vision," and huge gallows-like poles take the place of the briefer posts that Leerie of fifty years ago climbed, one by one on his ladder, and did not forget to nod to the pale-faced child who had been watching for him, feverishly eager for his notice. R. L. S. never saw his native town under the dominion of electric light. He would have sorrowed that, when the twilight falls, the dazzlingly pallid glare from the new lamps so blinds the eyes that it obliterates the Castle from walkers in Princes Street. It used to loom forth across the abyss, all the grander for its dark setting. R. L. S. noted one evening the grim old stronghold silhouetted "against the sky as thin and sharp in outline as a castle cut out of paper." When the red of the western horizon had faded, and the night was starry and clear, the noble profile of the topmost towering height of High

Dunedin was still to be seen after the mellow gas lamps, "like biddable domestic stars," were lit. R. L. S., one of the babes that has done honour to his stony-faced nurse, Edinburgh, liked to walk along Princes Street to hear the bugle sound its recall, and look across to the giant crag, crowned by its turrets and ramparts. His mother, on her last visit to Howard Place, when she heard again —as he prophesied she would—the haunting echo of his footsteps in the old nursery, spoke also of the days when Leerie, emulating the punctuality "of heaven's orbs," was watched for by the housebound child in No. 8, who proudly boasted he had a lamp before his door. She also then explained that though people wondered her Louis had, as an author, indited so few lines to his mother, for the public to read, she knew he held it went without saying children should love their mothers, though many forgot their nurses who had given the best years of their lives to their thankless charges, and was proud as Cummy of the praise in the dedication of the *Verses*. Mrs Stevenson was his earliest biographer, his amanuensis before he could even shape pot hooks, his encourager and guide into the arduous paths of literature. Yet though he penned few lines to his mother, she was well content to have it so, though mightily pleased with the inscription of the collection of his Essays, "Memories of Childhood and Youth: Portraits of those who have gone before us in the battle"—"In

name of past joy and present sorrow"—the latter being his father's death. "He was always my dearest," R. L. S. wrote. In his essay on John Knox he explains, "We love our mothers otherwise than we do our fathers." A more devoted mother than that of R. L. S. it would be hard to find. Not only during his clinging, delicate youth was she his guardian angel and companion, but when she had reached threescore, she uprooted herself from her comfortable Edinburgh home, and followed her nomadic son into new, uncouth lands. In her letters from Samoa, as it is said truly in the preface, "to others she was content to leave the novelist and writer for all her pride and joy in his success; and to keep for herself, and for those who would read her letters, the memory of the little son, the delicate, greatly beloved child of so many anxious bygone years. That at least was her own, and remained with her to the end; for if there were a 'dear resting-place' to be left behind on Vaea Mountain, there was no less dear a memory still waiting to meet her in the grey and wind-swept Edinburgh streets, which were his home and hers."

She was the twelfth child in the well-filled Manse at Colinton, and her brother, Dr George Balfour, has left us a description of Mrs Stevenson as he recalled her in her girlhood. She married before she was out of her teens; "Tall, slender, singularly graceful, brilliantly fair in complexion, she

was known throughout the parish as 'the minister's white-headed lassie'; her greatest pleasure was to 'nurse' any baby she could get hold of, and to reach one she would 'kilt her coats' and wade through all the burns in the parish, and many a time through the Water of Leith itself. The sweet and sympathetic temper which made her so welcome and kind a nurse made her also the delightful companion she was to all throughout her life, and enabled her to make a perfect heaven upon earth of a household which contained within itself the elements of discord." We see from the foregoing how strong was the maternal instinct in R. L. S.'s mother. In her letters, *From Saranac to the Marquisas*, where she makes light of all difficulties, her one thought centred on her son's welfare. A few words of hers reveal to us how her thoughts are twined round him: "While Louis and I are left to ourselves it seems oddly like the old days in Heriot Row. Then when 'Papa dined out' Lou and I used to indulge in dishes we were not allowed at other times—particularly rabbit pie, I remember—and so we do still. *I sometimes almost forget that my baby has grown up.*"

Mrs Stevenson, like the Beloved Vagabond, possessed the divine sense of humour which rainbows the tears of the world, and, like her son, she had the secret of perennial youth. R. L. S. boasted on one of the rare occasions in his Edinburgh days when he was in orthodox evening dress, that as

a child in velvet tunics when he went to children's parties he remembered the pride with which he viewed his mother. The other guests' mammas, he said, were quite old and sedate, but Mrs Stevenson was so pretty and full of zest, she was like a big child to him and them. To the end of his days he saw his mother fair and comely, daintily trig in figure and dress, and by her keen interests, her gift of sympathy, she kept for ever in touch with the aspirations and conceits of the rising generations. She bore her sorrows, the loss of a kindly husband and their only son, adored more than most, with a serene calm. When she returned to Scotland after R. L. S.'s death—the very belongings of her home in Heriot Row had been transported to Samoa—she settled down anew in Edinburgh with her sister, Miss Balfour. Friends at first feared to meet her, so great had been her sorrow, but as of yore she greeted them, cheerful and smiling. She loved to talk of her boy from his baby days. Like another mother, she had treasured things concerning him in her heart. He was as dear to her as a delicate infant over whom she and her husband watched and feared, when he was, as she said, only "our Louis then," not, as now, the whole world's. People marvelled at Mrs Stevenson's composure as she talked of and listened to the praises of the lad that was gone. Her unselfishness helped her; but the secret of her brave front, her unwaveringly cheerful mien, was to be found

THE MOTHER OF R. L. S.
by Arch. Dumbreck

in the Bible which Thomas Stevenson had used when conducting the daily family worship. She gave it to an Edinburgh church. In her husband's hand is the date of their marriage and of their son's birth. In hers the record of her husband and son's death, and after the latter added, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou did'st it." Her last words were of her boy. Some three years after her return from Samoa she was seized with pneumonia. The evening before her death she started up saying, "There is Louis; I must go," and fell back unconscious.

> ". . . not only I
> But all your dozen of nurslings cry,"

writes R. L. S.,

> "What did the other children do?
> And what was childhood wanting you?"

"Chief of our aunts" was Jane Balfour, Mrs Stevenson's elder sister, who died, 1907, at Colinton, having lived over ninety well-filled years. She was handicapped by defective sight and want of hearing; but her keen wits, perceptions, and her intuitive quickness overcame her infirmities, and to the last she was surrounded by friends, young and old.

Her nephew, Louis Stevenson, wrote of her :—

"I have mentioned my aunt. In her youth she was a wit and beauty, very imperious, managing, and self-sufficient. But as she grew up she began to suffice for all the family as well. An accident

on horseback made her nearly blind and deaf, and suddenly transformed this wilful empress into the most serviceable and amiable of women. There were thirteen of the Balfours, as (oddly enough) there were of the Stevensons also, and the children of the family came home to be nursed, to be educated, to be mothered, from the infanticidal climate of India. There must sometimes have been half a score of us children about the Manse; and all were born a second time from Aunt Jane's tenderness. It was strange when a new party of these sallow young folk came home, perhaps with an Indian ayah; this little country manse was the centre of the world, and Aunt Jane represented Charity. The text, my mother says, must have been written for her: 'More are the children of the barren than the children of the married wife.'"

During one visit to his grandfather, the treasures and contents of the parlour were ranged for cleaning on the circular grass plot between the churchyard and the house, and he recalls "how I stayed out climbing among the chairs and sofas. Falling on a large bone and skull, I asked what it was. 'Part of an albatross,' Auntie told me, and, duster in hand, she quoted with great verve to the dark-eyed, white-faced child, *The Ancient Mariner*."

"Willie, a cousin, had a crossbow," R. L. S. tells us; "but up till this date I never envied him its possession. After this, however, it became one

of the objects of my life."

Scott says: "Children derive impulses of a powerful and important kind in hearing things which they cannot entirely comprehend, and there-fore to write *down* to children's understanding is a mistake; set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out." Thus Sir Walter began acquaintance with Shakespeare. Stevenson had wonderful visions raised in his imagination over Coleridge's poem; but alack, when he read it later, he was "utterly disappointed." However, when he met albatrosses in the South Seas, on the waste of waters, on desolate oceans, he could not fail to admire their majestic size and gliding flight; and also the sight of the great birds recalled the spring cleaning at Colinton Manse, the pot of Lily of the Nile, and Aunt Jane, like the thorough housekeeper she was, armed with a duster, instructing autocratic King Louis, for, as Elia says, "To be sick is to enjoy monarchial prerogatives." There also the strict rules were relaxed a little for him. His grandfather was a disciplinarian. His congregation had to have valid excuses for non-attendance at church. "A sin without pardon" was to tread on the borders. R. L. S. believed the minister measured the mark and the shoes when the children went to bed. One very tiny footprint was found, and the culprit in vain protested someone else had put on his shoe.

Miss Balfour had long been her father's house-

keeper at the old Manse her nephew has made the world familiar with, below the level of the churchyard, but founded on a rock.

"Low-lying and unhealthy do you call it?" said Rev. Lewis Balfour. "Well, I've spent a goodly part of eighty years in the Manse, and have always enjoyed good health; and when my children ail, they always come here to recruit."

Within its hospitable walls much of R. L. S.'s child play took place. The dining-room recalled brick building exploits, the long stone lobby indoor races and a playfield, for it was so wide and the rooms small. An old servant of the Manse was married, 2nd June, Dr George Balfour's birthday; the ceremony took place in the lobby of the Manse, and the minister officiated. Margaret Balfour (a few years later Mrs Stevenson), a graceful, winsome young lady, was "best maid." The old Manse had many rooms. It was an ideal place for hide-and-seek as well as the garden with its beech hedge, lined with holly evergreen throughout the seasons. The future author found it a wonder-laden place. He trembled but revelled in the Witches' Walk, as he named it, and firmly believed he saw antelopes feeding by the deodar.

Miss Balfour held firm but kindly sway over her adopted families. Her storeroom was a place they visited with awe, following the swish of her long skirts which impressed the impressionable small Louis who followed in the wake of the Chief

MISS JANE WHYTE BALFOUR

of Aunts. This storeroom was large and stone-paved, like the big lobby. R. L. S.'s grandmother, returning tired from Edinburgh after one Friday's marketing, put away her stores and cut up the soap to harden. The stone flags struck chill on her thin shoes. She ailed, and the minister was called from the pulpit on Sunday as his wife was so ill. She died, 1844, and Miss Balfour took her place, so her sister, the gay, loving Maggie, looked on Miss Balfour as a kind of mother. It was to her Mrs Stevenson wrote her letters *From Saranac to the Marquisas, and from Samoa.* Delightful reading they are, as the clever old lady who received them found. When her nephew Tusitala, "the Teller of Tales," died, his mother returned to live under the shadow of the Castle Rock, and Miss Balfour joined her. The two sisters had ruled over separate homes for more than half a century; but, both happy-natured and adaptable, they re-settled under one roof again, in a flat which commanded a royal view of the wooded banks of the Water of Leith. The familiar brown river sang below their unique eyrie in the heart of the city. It had wound past their mutual old home, and its song was sweet with memories for them. The trees in the gardens flanking this valley form a green foreground to the distant peep of the broad estuary of the Firth of Forth where they could see "ships tack for the Baltic," and Mrs Stevenson watched from her new drawing-room window

one of "the guiding stars for seamen," erected by her husband, flash from Inchkeith.

Miss Balfour, on her younger sister's death, moved to her brother's house and ended her days, as they had begun, at Colinton, a changed place from the quiet village, four miles from Edinburgh, she had been reared in, where she had mothered so many families of different children, sent back to recruit under her care, while living with her brother, Dr George Balfour, who had retired there.

"Tell me what you see from this window," she said when alone with a visitor. When the streets of new white and red villa-houses were described, she shook her head; but then when the Water of Leith, circling round the "cup full of sunshine," by a renovated church and manse, was mentioned, and "topmost Allermuir and steep Caerketton." "Everlasting and unchanged," she said. "Maybe it *is* Colinton, but I began to think George, who always liked playing tricks, had brought me here and just said it was Colinton." "That youth, my uncle," Louis Stevenson called this George, Dr Balfour, in the introduction to *Underwoods*. An article in *Chambers's Journal* lately tells of a servant at Colinton Manse, in the days of the Rev. Lewis Balfour's reign. She served there at what now seems the absurdly small wage of £7, and a great amount of work she did for it. She came from Mrs Balfour's native Ayrshire, for the Rev. Lewis Balfour's wife was a daughter of the minis-

ter of Galston, satirised by Burns in *The Holy Fair*. She wrote to her coming handmaid many letters. Here is one which has been preserved :

"COLINTON MANSE, *Monday Evening*,
"*23rd October* 1843.

"MARGARET M'KERROW,—I have just heard from Mrs Stewart that you are willing to come at the term to be our kitchen servant, and I hope we may be comfortable together. You will have our cooking, which is in general perfectly plain. The great point in our service is perfect cleanliness, and never to leave anything dirty or out of place. I am also particular in having my work done in my own way and in my own time. Nothing unreasonable will be asked or expected. Besides the kitchen work, you will have the under flat of the house to keep clean (except the dining-room), the servants' room, and the outdoor places ; the hens to feed and the hen-house to keep perfectly clean; kitchen floors, coal-house, well-trough, &c. Of course there are many little particulars which it is impossible to specify in a letter, but I may mention a few of them—assisting to make the beds, clean the shoes, &c. Mr Dalgleish mentions that you think the wages small, but ten shillings more in the half-year is the highest I have given since I had a nursery-maid, and as I will have your travelling expenses to pay I cannot promise you more than the three pounds for this half-year. However, if you study to please me, be sober-minded,

honest, obliging, and willing to do all you can to serve myself and Mr Balfour, as well as be ready to do anything in your power for the young folk, I will give you five shillings above the three pounds. There are just four of our young folk statedly at home, and we are often very quiet, though there is a hurry at a time. Any extra work that you may not be up to I promise to give you assistance in till you come into the way of it; but it will be a great comfort to me, as well as to yourself, if, when you have learned the method that I like, you endeavour to attend to it, not with eye-service, as a man pleases, but in singleness of your heart, as unto God. Remember also that I admit of no gossiping. I give out the most of our washing, so I consider the work quite easy for two women when my rules as to method are attended to. I hope it is the next term that you intend to enter at, as the present kitchen servant leaves us at that time."

George Balfour, when Margaret M'Kerrow was Manse servant, was a medical student who smoked an evening pipe by her kitchen fire, and she cooked the supper given when he took his degree. He settled and wrought in Edinburgh, where as a heart specialist he won his laurels. At a function at St Andrews, some fourteen or fifteen years ago, his remarkably handsome, clear-cut face, his white hair and silvery beard, his tall, up-

DR. GEORGE BALFOUR

right carriage among those on the platform made many ask who was the distinguished-looking man. Mrs Stevenson was among the audience, and some one remarked to her on her brother's fine presence. She nodded pleased acquiescence. "Yes," she said, "my sister, Miss Balfour, and I at public gatherings have often said to each other, 'Oh, look at that handsome man,' and laughed when we found it was only our brother George!"

Dr Balfour and his elder sister were supposed to be the delicate members of the large family of the Rev. Lewis Balfour, but they lived beyond the allotted span, and both died within sight of the old Manse. R. L. S. boasted he had in his ancestral line "shaken a spear in the Debatable Land," and Andrew Lang points out, in the Swanston edition of R. L. S.'s works, to which he wrote a preface, that R. L. S. . . . "was not perhaps aware that through some remote ancestress on the spindle side he came of Harden's line and that he and I had a common forebear with Sir Walter Scott" —so it is not to be wondered at that he adopted literature as a profession.

The Lowland Borders gave us many famed for wielding the pen as well as the sword. R. L. S. as a child crooned what he called "Songstries" to himself. It was easy for him with his clear memory to thus write his nursery biography in these lilts. They are so simple and genuine, children like them, and those who sit in the elders' seat joy again to

read his *Garden of Verses*. He was certainly lucky, for he had many pleasures within his reach which no money could purchase. The ivory gates and the golden which are said to guard fairyland will not open for wealth or strength, but swing back at the slightest pressure from a child's hand. It seems that R. L. S. retained the knack of that enviable touch. Like Peter Pan, he refused to grow up. The entrance through the ivory gates and the golden was always open to him. He saw from the magic casements into faery lands, not into forlorn but enchanted country. He listened to rhymes of delight and old refrains which he said only children can hear aright. When he was a man going on for middle age he sang them anew, remembering the people and places who had made his days of yore happy.

CHAPTER THE SECOND
MEMORIES & PORTRAITS

"To every man there openeth
A way and ways and a way,
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low.
But to every man there openeth
A High Way and a Low.
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall go."

JOHN OXENHAM.

COLINTON MANSE

THE GARDEN OF VERSES MARKED R. L. S.'s first appearance before the public as a poet. Like sweet-scented flowers the recollections of golden days of childhood are never forgot. Stevenson's memory was truly evergreen, and by this song sequence

> "Yet will he hold us thrall
> By his fine art's sweet necromancy
> Children and seniors many a year."

They were published when he was a well-known author, of thirty-seven, but his first books appeared when he was but sixteen.

The Pentland Rising, a page of history, was printed in 1866 on the two hundredth anniversary of the fight at Rullion Green; and about the same time an allegorical dialogue of brief length, called *The Charity Bazaar*, was written for his mother's Zenana Mission Sale, the first time his name was attached to printed matter. *The Pentland Rising* was a thin, green pamphlet; the expense of issuing this anonymous work of twenty pages his father defrayed.

When a small boy he had dictated stories when he dreamed he heard the rush of pens writing, and an essay on Moses. At school editing magazines filled up his time, and there he tried his prentice hand on novels, and one was *On the Pentland Rising*, "an episode well known to him from his infancy, as the Covenanters had spent the night before their defeat in the village of Colinton." His

chiefmost aunt, Miss Balfour, writes : " I was in Heriot Row in 1866, and Louis was busily engaged altering *The Pentland Rising* then, to please his father. He had made a story of it, and by so doing had, in his father's opinion, spoiled it. It was printed not long after in a small edition, and Mr Stevenson very soon bought all the copies in, as far as was possible." The father evidently regretted making it public, and in his collected works the son desired it to be omitted. " Let me be buried first," he begged. The prototypes in this green brochure, which told anew the tale of the tragedy which was enacted in Scotland two hundred years before, left their names on their page of Scottish history. R. L. S. well knew Rullion Green, the marshy ground between two spurs of the Pentlands where the Rullion Burn flows down a deep chasm and the whaups cry. It is a deadly record this of those who fell there or were tracked down after, and perished on the gallows for their faith. The children, too, suffered at this Killing Time, and died, loyal like their fathers, for "Christ's ain Kirk and Covenant." One man who escaped from Rullion Green was far spent. He dragged himself to a farm and sought and obtained shelter —a dangerous thing to grant then, for it might have truly brought the owner's house about his ears, and his death. The fugitive begged his host to bury him where through a gap he looked to his native Ayrshire. He died under an oak bush near-by,

and never gave his name. He is buried on the hillside near the Cauldstane Slap Pass, among the heather; and his friend in need, one Adam Sanderson of Blackhill, carved above him on a stone, "Sacred to the memory of a Covenanter." R. L. S. must, in his wanderings over the Pentlands, have seen this nameless grave. A monument on Rullion Green, erected in 1738, marks where "Those who sacrificed themselves for the peace, the liberty and the religion of their fellow-countrymen, lay bleaching on the field of death." An open-air service is now held annually on the spot to keep people in remembrance of those whose blood dyed a page of history during the Pentland Rising.

The second pamphlet, *The Charity Bazaar*, was written for Mrs Stevenson's sale, as her son's contribution. She, a daughter of the Manse, retained always an interest in her Church's foreign missions, and, when she visited strange far-off lands, following her son in sunshine and in shadow, in search of his El Dorado, in her letters written home to her sister, there are often references made as to how she saw the administration of funds collected by those who, like herself, wrought with their needles. These firstling booklets of R. L. S's cost sixpence. The original copies are now rare and sell at a high figure. When they had become of value to bibliomaniacs, someone remarked to Mrs Stevenson, "I suppose one or two copies of *The Charity Bazaar* would now bring in as much

as all you made at your sale." "Not at all," the author's mother replied rather indignantly, proud as she was of the money value of the rare pamphlet; "I made £70, and we sewed things ourselves for bazaars in these days; we did not buy a lot of china abroad cheap, and sell it dear." An Edinburgh bookseller finding, laid by on his premises, forgotten copies of these sixpenny books he had printed in 1866, not realising their present value, filled up a chink in a box for America with them. The Charity Bazaar was held in 17 Heriot Row, where the Stevensons had moved, their final Edinburgh home—a sunny terrace with gardens in front made pleasant with stretches of sward. The upward slope is bosky and wooded, very different from the time "The Highland Lady" in her memoirs speaks of it "as only a long strip of unsightly grass, a green fenced by an untidy wall, and abandoned to the use of the washer-woman." It was in this room where the Charity Bazaar was held that R. L. S. first met Mrs Fleeming Jenkin, who was calling on his mother one winter's afternoon. She told in *Chambers's Journal* how, in the twilight, their conversation was interrupted by "a voice, peculiar, vibrating, a boy's voice. Mrs Stevenson introduced her son. The voice went on," said Mrs Jenkin; "I listened in perplexity and amazement. Who was this son who talked as Charles Lamb wrote? This young Heine with the Scottish accent?" She saw him when he

came down to open the door for her, "a slender, brown, long-haired lad, with great dark eyes, a brilliant smile, and a gentle deprecating bend of the head. I asked him to come to see us. He said, 'Shall I come to-morrow?' As I sat down to dinner I announced, 'I have made the acquaintance of a poet.' He came on the morrow, and from that day forward we saw him constantly."

In this drawing-room where Louis Stevenson, then eighteen, and looking sixteen, found a friend, were two kangaroo vines; and sheltering behind one of them in the far-off third window, he had been sitting reading by the dying daylight when Mrs Fleeming Jenkin came in to see his mother, who said she always associated the vines with her first acquaintance with Mrs Jenkin. Mrs Stevenson carefully tended these plants; they throve in her bright windows. "I envy you your vines," said a visitor one day. "I envy you your daughters," she replied. "Will you exchange?"

He was entering the coiled perplexities of youth when those two initial works were printed. When the unquestioning obedience of nursery days had given place to the opposing currents of an awakening personality, the biddable child, the gentle boy, changed into a strange perverse youth, rebellious of all that smacked of order and orthodoxy. He mentions as a characteristic of his father, "his inmost thoughts were forever tinged with Celtic melancholy"; and the son, for all his constant ex-

pounding of the gospel of joy, had in him, too, this strain which ballasted him and saved him from being nauseatingly sweet. He tasted of the bitter as well as the sweets of life. He was a born adventurer, and he met early with disappointments to gilded anticipations. An old German writer says, "The first school-going is the most daring of all adventures; each small lad as he crosses the home threshold that morning is a Columbus steering for a new world." In his case the novelty quickly wore off. His mates were rough and not amenable to his requests. They usurped the best places in the game by right of might. They jeered at the whey-faced boy rolled in mufflers. The girls were gentler and kinder to him. One, who then had precise curls and severely prim features, he recognised and pointed out years after on Duddingston Loch as the lady whom he had worshipped, at Mr Henderson's Preparatory School, with devoted awe. He went to the Academy, but fear of draughty class-rooms and rude handling by stronger lads made his mother change him to various private schools. His father held peculiar views as to education, and let his son do as he listed as to lessons, so Louis learned what he fancied, bringing home no prizes, to Cummie's sorrow. He read much in his leisure hours, thought his long, long thoughts, as he wandered about. Edinburgh buildings had much to tell him. "They chattered to him," says one, and he hearkened to

their story of his own romantic town where the old streets are paved with passion, tragedy, poetry, and heroism. He had early gripped his destiny. Mr Bellyse Baildon, a school-fellow at Mr Thomson's, a private school, inclined also to literature, says in *Temple Bar*: "Our freedom from home tasks gave us leisure for literary activities. For even then he had a fixed idea that literature was his calling, and a marvellously mature conception of the course of self-education through which he required to put himself in order to succeed." At this time, except for Mr Baildon, he had no friends of his own age. He had a very lonesome boyhood once he entered on his teens. His neighbouring compatriot children were too boisterously healthy. School over, they came forth, uproarious after its constraint, to romp and whoop; so while other boys fought or dared one another to mischief in the Heriot Row Gardens, R. L. S. sat aloof, and they promptly dubbed him a muff. "A Lantern-Bearer," in *Chambers's Journal*, lately drew a refreshing picture of an out-of-door R. L. S., where he is more like an ordinary lad, not an appreciated genius. "A slender, long-legged boy in pepper-and-salt tweeds," he is described as, "and he had about him some indescribable influence that forced us to include him in our childish ploys as looker-on, critic, and slave-driver." It was he who urged the more sturdy lads to dig an extraordinary deep pit on the sands at North Berwick; in the same year

he invented Lantern-Bearing as a September evening occupation. He encouraged them, fed them with apples, and with national caution refrained from eating them himself, and told them tales. The pit dug, they lit a fire of driftwood and dry seaweed, and he descended with them. "He sat in a favourite position, his knees drawn up, his arms round them, and his chin on his knees. In the dim firelight and the more perceptible smoke, he looked like a son of the witch of Endor. Sometimes, beyond the printed pages of his works, the memory recalls beautiful phrases, melodious setting of everyday words, dreams of faery, and flights of imagination that marked out as other than ourselves the strange boy that we called then Louis Stevenson. No one had the remotest intention of competing with R. L. S. in story-making. He was our acknowledged chief in this respect, and his tales, had we known it, were such as the world would listen to in silence and with wonder."

Two novelists from the same exalted city, who plied the attractive craft of romance in the nineteenth century, were famed as "tellers of tales" to their contemporaries; for Scott, in an autobiographic scrap, speaking of High School days, says: "In the winter play-hours when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fireside."

This pit-digging episode remembered by the

"THE ROARING SHEPHERDS" COTTAGE,
SWANSTON

Lantern-Bearer took place when R. L. S., as he tells us, was at the ripe age of fourteen years. "I bought a cudgel, got a friend to load it, and henceforward walked the tame ways of earth, my own ideal radiating pure romance." He continued in that pathway to his journey's end, mantling his world with wonder.

Soon after the printing of the two initial brochures, the Stevensons leased Swanston Cottage, a house nearer the pastoral Pentlands than deeply buried Colinton. Edinburgh is greatly blest by having within its ken the two giant forces which move the hearts of human beings—the sea and the hills. The Forth, a wide and sometimes stormy firth, glitters or frets at its feet. And now, with tramways in plenty, we can escape from Princes Street with its crowd and traffic, in half an hour, after a brief train journey and a mile's walk, instead of the tramp of feet and the groans of motors, hear only the cackle of the shy grouse, and feel the invigorating breath of winds austere and pure. It is the custom of Edinburgh people to leave their city when Courts, colleges, and schools rise in August; but when business held Mr Stevenson, senior, and classes claimed his son, Mrs Stevenson sheltered securely, "Frae nirly nippin' Eas'lan' breeze, Frae Nor'lan' snaw an' haar o' seas," at Swanston, while her husband and son walked to and fro to their work. Swanston is a well-known spot nowadays, for every-

one who has read R. L. S.'s biography, fiction, or poems, is made acquainted with the bonny bit. When supposed to be a pattern idler, "weel neukit atween the muckle Pentlands' knees," he says, he lived with words. From his lurking places among the hills of sheep, from the dells which wrinkled Caerkitton's face, he looked past his precipitous city, its Castle and spires stencilled against the sky, to where gleamed the waters of the Firth of Forth. Scott, when a truant boy, hiding on Blackford's uncultured breast, gazed on the same view. The wizard, Sir Walter, saw the islets on the Forth "like emeralds chased in gold." One of these islands R. L. S., in his *College Memories*, says, reminded him of his forefathers' works, of the strenuous race to which he belonged. Now, on it thin-lipped guns lie ready to speak deadly words to invaders ; but for more than a century, above the now masked batteries, a light has nightly guided seamen. When fears of Napoleon sent shudders through the land, a fire in an open brazier was the sailor's guide. A traveller of that time noted, on his way from Kennoway to study at Glasgow, that Inchkeith "with its dense pillar of smoke rising from the dying coal fire that had blazed all night on its summit, had really quite the appearance of one of those volcanic islands of which one reads in books of travel." Stevenson, in his *College Memories* (which he wrote in 1871, for a University Bazaar), tells of a man who

had seen the "coal lowe" on Isle of May (which stands further out in the mouth of the Firth) in R. L. S.'s grandfather's time. "Thus he was,' he writes, "for me a mirror of things perished; it was only in his memory that I could see the huge shock of flames of the May beacon stream to leeward, and the watchers, as they fed the fire, lay hold, unscorched, of the windward bars of the furnace." The May, like other islands in the Forth, had been the refuge of holy men in troublous times—an early beacon-light of Christianity.

At the end of the 'sixties among his hills of home he set deliberately to learn to write. The flame of his purpose burned strong, though unobserved by those around him. He "grew" in the soothing, unjostled solitude of the uplands as Thoreau grew by his pond. Swanston not only included the cottage the Stevensons dwelt in, whose history is recorded in his book on Edinburgh, but took its name from a farmhouse, built like all peel towers of the Middle Ages, to be a refuge when raiders were riding in search of fat steers, for a dower for a daughter, or for beasts to make into casks of salt meat so the dish of spurs—the hint to ride—might not be served to the laird. A few cottages rose under its guardian shelter. Those in this hamlet recall R. L. S., "aye running about with lang Todd amang the hills, and getting him to tell all the stories he kent"; or "he lay aboot dyke backs wi' a book. It was na' jaloosed that he

would ever come to muckle." In a proverb of his native land, when in simpler times they supped broth with gipsy-fashioned ladles, he was judged more likely to spoil a horn than make a spoon. He gained strength and knowledge in the hill solitudes hearkening to the tale of the shepherd under the thorn. John Todd gave insight of things pastoral to the queer-looking youth in the velveteen coat, battered straw hat, who inclined an attentive ear to strange words and anecdotes. R. L. S. began at this period his eccentricity of dress, clothing himself in a manner unsuited to his position and climate. "Daft" was a term applied to him by his Swanston neighbours—*anglice*: peculiar, if not slightly wanting. They could not understand why Mr and Mrs Stevenson's only son should elect to wear not tweeds to withstand the climate, but uselessly thin, worn-out garments, and that he should scale the hillsides badly shod in leaky patent leather boots. In Swanston Cottage, now, Stevenson's admirer, Lord Guthrie, keeps as a relic a pair of what John Todd would have called "weise-like boots" which R. L. S. wore at Samoa when he wore footgear at all, though he speaks of riding with spurs on his bare heels. "Daft-like" was a term also applied to him by a shrewd Edinburgh Professor who asked, "who was the foreign, daft-like lad who walked across the Dean Bridge on Sundays with Wattie Simpson." "Tom Stevenson's son!" he exclaimed, on being told. "I'm

AN OLD FRIEND OF P. L. S. AT SWANSTON

sure his father, honest man, wouldn't grudge him a greatcoat and a respectable suit of clothes."

Times are changed; in the early 'seventies professional men wore high silk hats and surtouts. There was no variety of headgear allowed to the stronger sex in Princes Street, therefore R. L. S.'s poverty-stricken garments from head to heel were more remarkable then than now, so Edinburgh people cannot be blamed for looking askance at a youth who seemed to acquire the shabbiest second-hand clothes imaginable.

His crowded ranks of fifty Balfour cousins having grown up and dispersed, he lived, because of his eccentricities, during what he called later his sullen period, a companionless, lonely life with his parents. Secluded Swanston, lapped in a fold of the Pentlands, suited his ruminative, aggrieved mood. He read and wrote there. He felt how immature had been his first two booklets, and with that iron determination which made the Stevensons, undaunted by destructive seas, persevere till amid the waves they reared their lighthouses, he set to work to attain his end. He drew from life two of his Swanston neighbours, John Todd, the shepherd, and Robert Young, the gardener. They were among his first originals, and he had so far advanced in his art of words when he sketched them that from his Patmos at Vailima he vows he could not improve on them, though he confesses, looking back through the mellow-

ing experience of years, he would have liked to rewrite his paper on the old Scotch gardener, as he had not done him justice. John Todd, the loud-voiced shepherd, was the counter-picture to Robert, the gentle, contemplative delver among the flowers. His boyish ardour and love of action made him belaud the herd who told of drovers on their way to the trysts. John Todd's picture was not published till 1887, but doubtless the first sketch of this Pastoral was executed earlier. He commissioned Cummy to buy a copy of *Longman's Magazine* and show Mrs Todd "the paper about her man."

Adam Ritchie, a ploughman in the hamlet of Swanston, speaking of R. L. S., said, "He was a devil to think, and he wasna sweir to speir what he didna ken."

The would-be author followed the plough with Ritchie, and, taking out his note-book, jotted down peculiar words of Scots dialect which he feared might soon become "a ghost of speech," and he regretted the "malleable tongue shall be quite forgotten."

In the winter time when he left school he attended college when working for a Science degree. In summer he had to learn the practical side of engineering. He was in Anstruther, one of the confusedly built, piled-up townlets on the shores of Fife. There the pampered only son first encountered the uncomfortableness of lodgings after

the comforts of his well-appointed home. He beguiled the evening hours covering reams of paper writing a romance on Hackston of Rathillet. His first journey "in the complete character of man, without the help of petticoats," in 1863, was with his father, who was bound to visit the harbour lights of Scotland, and took Smout, as he called his son, to see those on the "fringe of gold" —for James VI., our British Solomon, described Fife as a beggar's mantle with a "fringe of gold."

The boy was extra well versed in his country's story. What fired his tindery imagination was the murder of Archbishop Sharpe on Magus Moor and the attitude of one of the conspirators—Hackston, with his "cloak about his mouth."

He was told by his father they were "to post" from St Andrews, and Smout was full of chagrin when a sorry cab drove them from the hotel door. But he looked out eagerly from it.

"I still see," he writes, "Magus Moor two hundred years ago; a desert place quite unenclosed; in the midst, the primate's carriage fleeing at the gallop; the assassins, loose-reined, in pursuit; Burley Balfour, pistol in hand, among the first. *No scene of history has ever written itself so deeply on my mind*; not because Balfour, that questionable zealot, was an ancestral cousin of my own. The figure that always fixed my attention is that of Hackston of Rathillet sitting in the saddle with

his *cloak about his mouth*, and through all that long, bungling, vociferous hurly-burly, revolving privately a case of conscience. It is an old temptation with me, to pluck away that cloak and see the face—to open that bosom and to read the heart. With incomplete romances about Hackston, the drawers of my youth are lumbered. I read him up in every printed book that I could get my hands on. Whenever I cast my eyes backward, it is to see him, like a landmark on the plains of history, sitting with his cloak about his mouth, inscrutable."

Hackston was the best-mounted among the men who, 3rd May 1679, waited for Sharpe on the moor; the others were on small nags. Rathillet gave his blood-mare to his servant, who rode forward and cut the traces of the fleeing carriage. The frightened horses diverged from the road. A cairn marked the spot where the enemy of the Covenant met his death ; later, the tombstone of a Covenanter was placed on the spot, and bears witness as to where the persecutor was done to death, and the persecuted lay buried. Stevenson says if historians had not mentioned the cloak about Hackston's mouth, "he would not have haunted the imagination of my boyhood"; but it did arrest it. His insatiable curiosity was whetted by the incident. He began the novel when fifteen, and resumed it at Anstruther, where he toiled at writing far into the night. He was forced to go to

THE SWANSTON GARDENER

From a painting by J. R[illegible] Patrick

bed because of the moths fluttering to his candle. He was fearless in the teeth of many dangers; but with what might be called minor ills, with a super-sensitiveness, he would not compete. "If there are many wood-worms in Germany I shall come home. The most courageous men in the world must be entomologists. I had rather be a lion-tamer," he wrote home from Frankfurt. He does not ever mention going to see where the cloaked Hackston dwelt. Rathillet, like many a Fife place, bears a Pictish name, and is on the Tay shore, not far from the old Abbey of Balmerino. It is snug and sheltered, and, till recently, peacefully secluded even in this age, by reason of its distance from the railway. Its big doocot tells still of its extensive manorial rights, for superstition kept many a house of doves in repair when the castle it once fed was roofless. What was in that tale of Stevenson's we have no chance of knowing. He cherished no illusions about his work. He knew when it was good, and he also knew when it was bad. He burned those romances written in his lodgings at Anstruther and Wick, so our inquisitiveness as to his Hackston of Rathillet is as unsatisfied as was Stevenson's as to what expression the Fife gentleman wore below the mask his cloak formed over his mouth. He says history broods over the peninsula of Fife like the easterly haar. The mists are thick as a London fog over some incidents, yet an imprisoned bee was noted flying from Sharpe's

snuff-box in the May evening, and it incited the conspirators to turn deaf ears to his petitions for life, as the tax-gatherer of honey and wax was deemed an emissary of Satan.

R. L. S. destroyed his firstling novels, and no doubt too with very sane judgment, for, as Mr Baildon—his schoolmate till he was sixteen at Thomson's private school, his literary friend, in his Lantern-Bearing days of pepper-and-salt tweeds—says: "There is no sign in these early attempts of anything really premature or precocious, and nothing can be truer, in spite of his early bent towards letters, than that his success was the fruit, as he himself alleges, of persistent industry and indefatigable perseverance." "I clear-sightedly condemned my own performances," R. L. S. confesses; "I liked doing them, indeed; but, when done, I could see they were rubbish."

The young author deserted the realm of romance for a while. He devoted himself to studying the ring and rhythm of words and how best to weld them into musical cadences. Verses he wrote, he told us, among the hills of sheep as well as in dens off the Lothian Road, which he frequented and was known among the waifs and strays he chummed with as "Velvet Coat." In 1869 he sent to Minnie, the cousin who had played at visiting India with him at the Manse, tiptoe on chair looking at the Eastern cabinets, a few verses with a hand-glass. He wrote others to the Light-

keeper. He collected the old Scotch words he gleaned from shepherd and ploughman around Swanston hamlet, and stored them in his head for further use. He felt he was acquiring command of words, and wrote in the first 'seventies some five sketches, one of them, already spoken of, on nurses.

In 1871 he took a trip to Cumberland, and he made a paper of this excursion to Cockermouth and Keswick. An artist of to-day, on his way to India, says that trying to hit the correct vulnerable spot on a tiger is good fun, but there is much pleasure and sport to be got *en route* taking notes of travel, jotting down scenes to make sketches of as you journey along by train or steamer. So R. L. S. found, for thus he rightly "spotted tigers" as soon as he could use the weapon which he took such pains to master and learn to handle so deftly. Moses would have liked to have had a jewelled observable staff within his grasp wherewith to work the miracle as to water. "What is that in thine hand?" he was asked; and when told to use the rod he held, he hesitated. Young R. L. S. would have chosen to sail forth in search of wars and adventures; but health tied him; but he, also, in his hand held a rod, and with that rod he killed his big game and hunted all his life with zest, as when a child he crawled, gun in hand, to stalk deer "behind the sofa back."

Stevenson realised he must be apprenticed to use his weapon, the pen, so he set himself to

learn the trade of literature. Others of his nation had strayed into it. Burns was spoken of as a "farmer with poetic proclivities." Scott, with his mind fixed on dry details of the law, for relaxation, took up the quill, and could not lay it down till he had given us *Waverley*. Galt, father of the Kail-yard School, and Dr John Brown, stumbled into literature. Stevenson, seemingly a fickle boy, saw for himself what road he must go; and after his studying in the Pentlands, working in winter time in his high-up study in Heriot Row, looking over to Fife and the North, he found his footing. "Roads" appeared in the *Portfolio*, 1873, under a pseudonym, and the author wrote to his mother: "It is quite the best thing I have ever done, to my taste. There are things expressed in it far harder to express than in anything else I ever had." He would not have liked the highways with motors. He liked to journey slowly, and note things as he went. "The mere winding of the path is enough to enliven a long day's walk in even a commonplace or dreary countryside. It is in following these capricious sinuosities that we learn only bit by bit, and through one coquettish reticence after another, much as we learn the heart of a friend, the loveliness of the country. The road is already there; we shall not be long behind," he wrote in this article when he signed himself as L. S. Stoneven. The byway was a magnet to him. He advised travellers to—

"Let the streams in civil mode
Direct your choice upon a road."

He did not forget the highways he had trod. "I gang nae mair where ance I gaed," he cried in exile, thinking of the way to Swanston by Fairmilehead, and remembering many a tramp along it when he was fixing his course. The article on College memories was one written in his student days, in which he speaks of the Professors he studied under. Of Kelland, he says, "There were unutterable lessons in the mere sight of that frail old gentleman, lively as a boy, kind like a fairy godfather, keeping perfect order in his class by the spirit of that very kindness." Stevenson gained a certificate of merit in Kelland's class, the only distinction of his University career. Professor Fleeming Jenkin was his friend and adviser, and R. L. S. became his biographer. Blackie's Greek class he played truant to. Yet Professor Blackie and the student whose face the Professor said he did not know, might, out of the class-room, have drawn together. R. L. S. disliked being told he aped Blackie, courting notice in eccentricity of dress; but the well-groomed, handsome, old white-haired Professor, in his plaid and wideawake, was comfortably clothed to face a boisterous climate, and the "lean, ugly student," as Stevenson dubs himself, was oddly robed and sometimes swathed in a curtain-like cloak, and at all times looking as if his bones were striving to make holes

in his thin clothes, and always badly needing brushing. Blackie, with a childlike vanity, liked people to notice him: so did the lean, ugly student, and they both at heart were simple and genuine.

Among memories and portraits is one on "The Character of Dogs." "My father," he wrote in 1894, "was the natural god of all the dogs in our house," and his son also tells us he scraped acquaintance with strange dogs in the streets. One of these he christened Bob. This was an Edinburgh loafer, a big, spotted, half-spaniel, half-pointer who lived, likely where he had been lost, near the Caledonian Station at the west end of Princes Street. He sheltered in shop doorways there in rainy weather, and Mr Stevenson, always when they met, spoke to him, scratched his chin, and took him into the nearest shop where he could buy him a mutton pie. We found we had a mutual acquaintance in Bob, and when Mr Stevenson was acting host to friends at dinner (and a prince of hosts he was), he would pause as he helped himself and say, "I wish I could take this to Bob. It is such a wet night, I hope he is in Duncan & Flockhart's doorway." His fancy in the line of dogs for his own house was Scotch—so-called Aberdonian were not then in vogue; and in his travels, likely visiting the lights on the Western Atlantic seaboard, he picked up in the Isle of Skye, terriers which, with a dash of some fluffy Spanish breed in them, landed like the *murid* sheep and

Arab horses from the Armada, gave the original stone-coloured, wire-haired terriers, short in the leg, and long in the jaw, a fuzzier, woollier coat than was in the native breed. These in time became familiar to us by Leech's cartoons, dogs like walking doormats. It was this kind of terrier Wordsworth had with him on his tour north, when he visited lone St Mary's, and saw the wan waters of the borderland "slip the green hills under." There was a succession of rough-coated tykes at 17 Heriot Row: Smeoroch, Jura, and Coolin. When R. L. S. went to Swanston for a time one winter and read Dumas, he says a retriever used to meet him when he came in from a walk and scurry upstairs to fetch his slippers. It was evidently a guardian at Swanston, maybe belonged to gentle Robert Young. Edinburgh's dogs, from the Middle Ages, had plentiful feeding-grounds in the Old Town, where, like Eastern pariahs, they were scavengers. In unhygienic times "middens" were handy for dinner for canines and pigs. Relics of our old allies, the French, live in words; and when a paternal Government began to encroach on the liberties of the people, and order how they should dispose of refuse, *backets* (wooden troughs: a word imported by the French refugees) came into vogue. Till recent times these backets were put out overnight to await the morning dustman. The Edinburgh dogs of the Old Town, as well as the pampered friends or tyrants of man

in the new West End, learned in their puppyhood how extravagant cooks can be, and how tasty illicit food is, and escaped—as R. L. S. remarks in local language it was called—to *rake the backets*. Dogs put out on doorsteps of a morning formed into gangs and raked, and fought or played in companies. The friend of R. L. S.'s who, he says, had three dogs who joined a new club were those of his fellow-voyager in the *Cigarette*. These three were a mastiff, an old black-and-tan terrier, and a pug. They used to treat R. L. S. in their library with tolerant neglect. They would growl disapproval at some visitors to their house, hail others with exuberant joy; but whenever R. L. S. came in, they only maybe raised their heads and curled up placidly to sleep again: for they learned though he roamed round the room restlessly, he let sleeping dogs lie, picking his steps with elaborate care, and never incurring a heel-nip from the old black-and-tan. Professor Blackie used to object to a dog as a companion in walks and talks, as they distracted the owner's attention, even from the most interesting subject under debate, and, impervious to the eloquence of the speaker, the thoughts of the owner of the dog would wander off after his straying favourite. R. L. S. agreed with Blackie: dogs interrupted conversation. He might be holding forth with his fluency of tongue; but his father, an attentive listener, a determined adversary in argument, would suddenly give his at-

THE SWANSTON GARDENER

tention to Jura or Coolin, cat-hunting, or turn to greet the stray Bob. R. L. S. owned a dog finally,—a long-haired Skye, as dark as the hills in the Misty Isle he hailed from—one of the breed with a great deal of expression in nose and ear, for its cairngorm eyes were hidden by its long, overhanging fringe of hair. My brother gave it to Mrs R. L. Stevenson, who, like her father-in-law, was the dog-lover in the house ; and after him it was christened Wattie, which, its master says, was contracted into Woggy, Woggs, Wiggs, and lastly, Bogue. He died, as R. L. S. tells, like the Highland warrior he was, in battle. "Glory was his aim, and he attained it, for his icon, by the hand of Caldecott, now lies among the treasures of the nation." Bogue lies buried near to Coolin at Skerryvore, the R. L. Stevensons' home at Bournemouth, called so, "for love of lovely words," after the strong tower, for which R. L. S.'s uncle and father had wrung a foothold for from the besieging seas. "Coolin's tombstone is now built into the front wall of Skerryvore, and poor Bogue's (with a Latin inscription also) is set just above it. Poor, unhappy wee man, he died, as you must have heard, in fight, which is what he would have chosen, for military glory was more in his line than domestic virtue," R. L. S. wrote to Cummie in 1887. Bogue had no successor in the author's household, where for six years this little Edinburgh-born dog reigned supreme.

He disputed with the doves and the cat and R. L. S.'s the right to call Skerryvore *their* house.

> "He rose, stiff with wrath,
> If any alien foot profane the path."

World wanderers, with quarantine regulations, cannot take their four-footed followers with them, and at Vailima no South-Sea dog took the place of the Skye celt.

Jura was a unique case of unforgivable jealousy in a dog. He was stolen, and when he returned, Smeoroch had taken his place in Mr Thomas Stevenson's heart. The son of the house was sympathetic to Jura; he reports: "I took him up to my room, and to be my dog in consequence, partly because I was sorry for him, and partly because I admired his dignity in misfortune."

Thomas Stevenson and his 'Smout' with Smeoroch at their feet, were photographed together: Louis, a boy well on in his teens, standing looking strangely sulky, and the dog very placid at his god's feet.

The sketch of "Thomas Stevenson, Civil Engineer," by R. L. S., is a memory and portrait which will help to bear his name, and the manner of man he was, in remembrance. The son who wrote it had composed a paper on "A New Form of Intermittent Light for Lighthouses" in 1871, which raised Mr Stevenson's hopes that Louis would follow in his steps and that he had learned something in his practical studies at Wick, besides going

down in a diver's dress, which he says was the best thing he got out of his engineering studies. But the son knew he would not follow the trade of his sires. He could truthfully say, in Dr Walter Smith's words, "I have done well, I say, for I have found my place in life and the work I can do." He made up his mind to tell Mr Stevenson of his resolve to adopt literature as his object in life and had a "dreadful walk (April 8th, 1871) with his father out to Cramond." A curious contrast they must have been that day, the serious-looking, square-jawed, older man, who by his very breadth and solidity looked as if he could not possibly have any connection with the lathy, attenuated youth in shabby clothes, of mountebankish appearance, who with much high stepping picked his way. But the man of calm demeanour who, with patient perseverance, could build those solid lighthouses amid the waste of waters, had endowed his fantastic, foreign-looking son with his indomitable determination. That inherited vein of perseverance took the weakly lad to the top rungs in the ladder of literature. But Mr Stevenson, senior, held during that afternoon that literature was no profession, and he insisted his son must train himself to what he called a recognised vocation. He encouraged consistent idlers at school, liking a boy to follow his own bent of reading; but when the scholars came to the vast plains of life, he held that his scholar should choose to plod along a trodden path

with a definite end. Mr Stevenson had seen in his day many young men on the threshold of life, who, oftener by reason of their father's name than merit, got an article into a friendly paper. They disliked office work and declared they were heaven-born authors, decided to settle down as such, and remained discontented idlers. During this notable walk R. L. S. chose, at his wise father's suggestion, the Bar. Perhaps seeing Craigcrook among the trees suggested Jeffrey, and Jeffrey, Lord Cockburn's snug bield of bonnie Bonaly, like Swanston, under shelter of the Pentlands. Then, of course, there was Scott. The Bar, R. L. S. quickly realised, was a platform from which he could start well in literature. So it came about that the ragamuffin, curious-looking youth agreed to become a student of law.

CHAPTER THE THIRD
COMRADES AND CANOES

"My dipping paddle scarcely shakes
The berry on the bramble-brakes;
. . . I wend
Beside the cottage garden end."

R. L. STEVENSON.

STEVENSON STATES HE DATES being done with morbidity and making a new departure to the fact that his third wish was granted him—"Oh Du Lieber Gott—friends!" The return of his cousin R. A. M. Stevenson to Edinburgh made all the difference to his outlook. They had been congenial playmates as boys one winter when R. L. S. was housebound; this nephew of his father's, who had kindred tastes and a fantastic imagination, was his comrade in *Child's Play*. Both were gipsily inclined and gipsy in appearance. Both liked to wander free of roofs and bonds and conventions. It was this cousin who invented an island Nosingtonia, of which he was king; and of course Louis, who imitated him, ruled over one also, called Encyclopædia.

They both greatly feared all desert isles would be discovered and inhabited before they were able to set sail and find a real one, not dreaming that the King of Encyclopædia was to be like Defoe, a marvellous enchanter whose island is still the first landing-place of youth on the shores of Storyland. Though the "footprint which startled Crusoe remains eternal on the field of romance," hidden treasure and the Blind Pew are its rivals and successors. The two Stevensons, when they were grown men, found their tastes still similar, and R. A. M. Stevenson muchly influenced his cousin, who found it easy to play "sedulous ape" to this amazing, unconformable kinsman. Louis

calls him "the man likest and most unlike to me that I ever met." He was the changeful as a chameleon, nimble-tongued, spring-heeled Jack in *Talk and Talkers.*

Henley, picturing R. L. S., states: "He will discourse with you of morals, music, marbles, men, manners, metaphysics, medicine, mangold wurzel, with equal insight into essentials, and equal pregnancy and felicity of utterance"; and R. L. S. says "Bob" was the "most valuable man to talk to, for he twisted like a serpent, changed like the patterns in a kaleidoscope, transmigrated from one point of view to another, and so, in an incredibly brief space of time helped you to view a question upon every side. He had the most indefatigable, feverish mind I have ever known."

From these two passages we see a strong vein of resemblance in suppleness of speech between the two Robert Stevensons. The father of "Rex Nosingtonia," Alan Stevenson (who was the eldest brother of R. L. S.'s father), had overstrained himself building that strong tower Skerryvore, and after years of ill-health died, 1865. Besides his one variously gifted son he had daughters: one, Katherine, to whom two poems in *Underwoods* are addressed. She also wrote some stories under her maiden name (she married a M. de Mattos), and the authorship of these, when sent to America, was wrongly ascribed to her cousin's wife in Samoa.

Alan Stevenson was a distinguished scholar and received a degree from the University of Glasgow as a Bachelor of Laws. He had at one time a disposition to study for the Church, but gave up the idea and adopted his father's profession. In a notice of him in 1848 in the *Scotsman*, we read: "Besides his purely professional excellences Mr Stevenson has genuine literary genius, not receptive merely, but in the true sense original."

There seems great variety of characters in the Stevenson family. The two namesakes and grandsons of Robert Stevenson, the builder of the lighthouse on that Bell Rock, famed in Southey's song by reason of piratical Ralph the Rover's curse having come home to roost thereon, never quite gave over their love of freakish diversions. They invented a word "Jink." "As a rule of conduct, Jink consisted in doing the most absurd acts for the sake of their absurdity and the consequent laughter." Then came an idea: they would get a society together to pawn everything under the name of John Libbel. They kept building up hopes as to the result of this freak. When they met in the dawn of the 'seventies in Edinburgh they seasoned the routine of life, as they had seasoned their porridge in *Child's Play*, with inundations or sugar snowstorms, with fantasies to make it palatable.

Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson chose art as his profession, and was studying painting when he again met Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson, who

was, we may say, also an art student, for, as Justin M'Carthy explains in his *History of the Nineteenth Century*: "What he saw, he saw; and what he saw, he could describe. If that is not to be an artist, then we, at least, have no idea of what an artist is." Both these artistic scions of the Stevensons had been given a goodly allowance of names. In 1868 the future author dropped his mother's name out of his signature, but the cousin remained many-initialed. These two, so alike in brilliance of imagination, in power of speech, in the power of the pen (for R. A. M. left off painting and became art critic and then Professor of Fine Art at Liverpool) hated going steadily along and cried:—

> "Give me the life I love,
> Let the lave go by me.
> Give me the jolly heavens above
> And the byway nigh me."

Both were Bohemian in appearance and in mode of living, and yet came of a race which for successive generations had chosen to be a family of engineers.

"Bob Stevenson for me is a presence utterly concrete, slouching, eager, quick-eyed, intimate and profound, carelessly dressed (at Sandgate he commonly wore a little felt hat that belonged to his son) and himself indissoluble matter and spirit, down to the heels of his boots. I miss such a one as Bob Stevenson, that luminous, extravagant talker, that eager, fantastic mind. I miss him

whenever I write. It is less pleasure now to write a story since he will never read it, much less give me a word of praise for it," says Mr Wells, in *First and Last Things*.

R. A. M. had also evidently the power of sympathy which drew so many friends around R. L. S. "We are as harps," says a modern poet, "that vibrate to a touch from stranger hands," and goes on to regret, "Few are the Davids to these harps of ours." These two strangely endowed Stevensons were musicians as well as artists, for "they learned the cunning of the instrument," and one of them poured out his soul in books, and made the world echo with his feelings.

Stevenson about this time began to make friends, his legal studies throwing him in contact with others of his age. Three of these were James Walter Ferrier, the grandson of Christopher North, Charles Baxter, and my brother Sir Walter. Ferrier he thus describes in his essay, "Old Mortality": "In his youth he was most beautiful in person, most serene and genial by disposition." Of Charles Baxter he wrote: "As a companion, when in spirits, he stands without an equal in my experience. He is the only man I ever heard of who could give and take in conversation with the art and polish of style that we find in Congreve's comedies." Walter Simpson was Athelred in *Talk and Talkers*, the "Cigarette" of the *Inland Voyage*, and a constant companion of R. L. S.'s for ten

years in Edinburgh in winter, in Fontainebleau or elsewhere in spring and summer.

Charles Baxter is the only survivor of the three friends whose coming into R.L.S.'s life and the study of Walt Whitman, he says, made a new departure for him. Stevenson appreciated qualities which he himself did not possess. The two gipsy-like Stevensons had enjoyed their mutual liking for propounding new theories and hatching fantastic quirks. Charles Baxter would undertake to play the wildest pranks with a serious air, such as befitted an Edinburgh Writer to the Signet, and would carry through his most audacious projects with a calm, assured mien. Stevenson, about to engage on some unorthodox venture, would be in a twitter of irrepressible excitement, anxious for everyone to see and appreciate its furtherance; but, in contrast, his tall lawyer friend would more often on the spur of the moment beard some lion in his den, and leave that lion too breathless with astonished shockedness to roar, or bring him forth on a string as tame as a well-controlled pet. He astonished his comrades by his execution of anything he undertook, and the way he carried through his well-matured schemes. My brother had, like Andrew Lang, been at the Edinburgh Academy with R. L. S., but, also like Mr Lang, he was senior by seven years to the coddled only son from Heriot Row, so Stevenson, who was but a "gyte" (as the juniors in that school are called)

when his future friends were elderly boys of seventeen, did not meet them. Walter was agile and athletic, and stood well to the fore in the playground, especially as a cricketer. Sports were not then compulsory, so the gentle, girlish gyte R. L. S., who could not have the principal place in the games he wanted to play, found the clackan (wooden racket), an Academy boy's inseparable companion, as handy for whacking others as for balls. He ran uphill home, no doubt "rasping his clackan" on the railings as he made his hero John Nicholson do. As soon as school was over, he busied himself with editing a magazine of which he was the undisputed chief and principal contributor. R. L. S. and his future friend had been nearly opposite neighbours from 1857, for 52 Queen Street, where the anæsthetic qualities of chloroform were discovered ten years before the Stevensons flitted to their final Edinburgh home, looks down on the lower level terrace of Heriot Row. Queen Street children played in another division of the Gardens, where the young people met on mutual ground, and formed lifelong friendships, or undying hatreds.

Opposite R. L. S.'s home, the gardens had a pond and a miniature island in it which we much envied, and when ice came we borrowed keys to this delectable garden, learned to skate, and crossed over to and explored the round dwarf islet ; but the weak-chested Louis, seldom out in

winter, never encountered his future fellow-voyager, whose blue eyes would have looked with kindly pity on the thin, whey-faced urchin, as he was described at this stage. Walter Simpson had started out from home early in life, having been sent to Egypt to a merchant's office. His father, having accepted the first baronetcy offered to a physician north of Tweed, in 1866, had the grief immediately after of losing his eldest son, a distinguished young doctor; the future merchant, called home to a house of mourning, did not return to the East, but went to Cambridge, where he took his degree, as he took life, without much trouble. Again sickness brought him back to Edinburgh. Long years of overwork at last told on his father, and Walter helped to nurse him in the months of illness which preceded his death. My father decided during this time, when facing his end, that Walter had better adopt the Bar as his profession, so it came about that the near neighbours and Academy boys, the future fellow-travellers, the "Cigarette" and the "Arethusa," at last met at the Speculative Society. R. L. S., speaking of this time, says: "I had six friends: Bob I had by nature, then came good James Walter, next I found Baxter, fourth came Simpson, somewhere about the same time I began to get intimate with Jenkin, and last came Colvin." Professor Fleeming Jenkin is Cockshot in *Talk and Talkers*, and R. L. S. became his biogra-

pher. He had been his truant pupil when studying engineering. He was fifteen years Stevenson's senior, but, like him, had perpetual boyish energy. He was very helpful to the younger man with his advice and sympathy, an influence for good. Stevenson says anent the biography he wrote that he had "to dig into the past of a dead friend and find him at every spadeful shine brighter." "Poor Ferrier, it bust me horrid," wrote R.L.S., hearing of his death in 1883, "my oldest friend except Bob. The only gentle one of all my friends save perhaps the other Walter." The "Cigarette" was by his Academy contemporaries usually known as Wattie, the name that Bogue, "the silly little selfish tangle," his master, calls him at Davos, started life with. Stevenson and Baxter usually spoke of my brother as the "Bart." or "Barry." After my father's death my brother and two others moved to a smaller house of which he was the ostensible head. This establishment was nicknamed "The Republic." Stevenson thought it sounded so independent when he imagined he suffered from the monarchial system. He became a frequent and a welcome guest, dropping in to dinner when he liked, or to smoke—especially past ten at night. The door-bell was not expected to be rung after that hour, but those who had the entrée to the snug bachelors' quarters sarcastically dubbed "The Bart.'s Baronial Halls" rattled on the letter-box and the door was opened if anyone was in. Steven-

son fancied this admittance by secret sign, this "open sesame," and constantly dropped in, for he was always bursting with new ideas to propound, and wished to air his views though they might be met with stern opposition. Truly "the spice of life is battle," he said; having had few of his own years to contradict him, he found in the Republic a corrective little committee who were amused at him dashing in at a fever heat of excitement over some great idea he wished to explain, but who, for his ultimate good, received it coldly or tried to explode it. His host was in many ways his antithesis in appearance and in inclinations, and that perhaps was well for both. The quiet commonsense of the Bart. kept the excitable questing soul of his younger friend in leash. Stevenson says: "He would permit no protestations and scarce any civility between us." Sir Walter had downright unflinching truthfulness ingrained into him, along with a profound shyness which allowed of no elaborate flourishes of manner among familiars. His kindliness of heart he expressed in deeds, and in so doing he fulfilled the Scriptural injunction as to not letting the left hand know what the right did. They agreed to differ in pace when they went a walking tour together. The long-legged, restlessly inquisitive Stevenson, hurrying ahead like the hare in the proverb, then pausing in some byway, while Simpson, squarely built, short in his stride, but

WAVERLEY
LONDON

steady-paced, oftener reached the goal first.

They both appreciated the different outlook each took of men and books. The conversation was flavoured with wit, and the Bart.'s replies, his quaint humour and caustic but slowly delivered repartees, delighted the dark-eyed, impressionable author. Though sometimes they were very serious in their views and censures of everybody and everything, as a counterbalance they were often primed with a superabundance of boyish mischief. One evening Sir Walter read a letter he had received from a city further north than Edinburgh, where a burgher of the name of Simpson had left a bequest to his native town. The authorities wrote to Walter about an armorial window on which a part of the money was to be spent, and also asked for some account of the origin of the name of Simpson. Stevenson saw possibilities for amusement to be obtained from this letter. He that evening entered fully into his own paternal genealogy, and lately reading his *Family of Engineers* recalled that spontaneous tale of his own beacon-lighting sires. Sir Walter sat meanwhile and concocted an origin for the name of Simpson. I think it was to the effect that, a little east of the silver links of Forth, a great battle between the West Lothians and invading Norsemen was once fought, in which a very short, very thickset man (with wonderfully good legs for knee-breeches and feet so brief and

square as to suggest club feet, added R. L. S., looking at his friend's resting on the fenderstool) distinguished himself by painlessly slaying thousands of the Berserkers. A great thanksgiving feast was held, and a child anxiously inquired which was the famous victor. "That's 'im, son," replied a Cockney ambassador, pointing to the progenitor of Sir Walter, from that day called Simpson. After much more such burlesque humbug Sir Walter, finding the northern burgher had three half-moons on his shield, ended by remarking he was glad to see the Aberdonian Simpson had more moonshine than he in his crest. The deliberate "Cigarette" wished to smoke a meditative pipe over this choice selection of nonsense Stevenson had egged him on to write; but hot-footed R. L. S. seized up the reply, and dashed over to a neighbouring post with it before Sir Walter had refilled his pipe. When a leading paper in the Granite City published his letter in full, it having been read at a council meeting, neither Stevenson nor the Bart. could decide whether the authorities were easily gulled or had the best of the joke. Diffident, with an abrupt, hesitating manner of speech, many can testify the Bart. was capital company with his flashes of wit and original views of his own. His "Spec." dinners were brilliant meetings. He was an untroubled host, and his guests were well entertained, for he was hospitable. Also being amiable, good-looking, and well-endowed with

money, having withal a modest opinion of his own worth, he was popular in the Parliament House, in drawing-rooms and on golf greens. As Athelred, in *Talk and Talkers*, Stevenson says: "He is the most unready man I ever knew to shine in conversation; there are sayings of his in which he has stamped himself with the very grain of the language. Yet it is not as a sayer of particularly good things that Athelred is most to be regarded; rather as the stalwart woodman of thought. I have pulled on a light cord often enough while he has been wielding the broad axe, and between us, on this unequal division, many a specious fallacy has fallen."

R. L. S. felt the sincerity and genuineness of his friend's verdicts. Examples of now stock stories are told illustrative of Louis Stevenson's kindness of heart; of how he had found a child lost, and wandered for hours about at night looking for his home; or, again, how he had carried a chair up to a sick friend, on his head, and how heavy it was and how hot he was. He felt like a scout that had done a good deed and wished commendation. The Bart., with his usual philosophic calm, listened to such tales as he smoked, and, slow to condemn, was judicial and explained to the emotional *voseur*, who stopped after his narration for applause, that he was a somewhat stupid fool. If he had taken little Murphy at once to the police, they would have found the child's home quicker

and housed him comfortably meanwhile. As to the chair borne on his head through the streets, Mr Thomas Stevenson would have ungrudgingly paid for a cab and saved his son overheating himself; and as to interfering with a man for whipping a dog on the plea it was *God's* dog, in all probability the dog deserved the hiding, and the chastisement probably made it see it was necessary to obey the by-laws enforced on man and beast. Fickle crowds invariably take the dog's part, but next moment would have it destroyed or complained of to the police for barking at their carriage or snapping at their children. We could speak feelingly on this point, having been overlenient in the upbringing of tykes of all degree, but one perverse terrier pursuing the scarce traffic in Princes Street of a Sunday was captured and mildly whipped, when an angry crowd gathered and sympathised with the panting and unrepentant culprit. Stevenson certainly never before or after in his life was treated to so much plain speaking and his affectations ridiculed as at our library fireside in the winters of the 'seventies. Sometimes he would argue he was right in some of his ridiculous ideas and behaviour, but the placid, taciturn baronet usually squashed him by some droll, dry comment. Stevenson bore no ill-will or malice if found fault with or beaten in discussion; he liked a dispute in words; only deadly dull people he was nearer being vicious to than anything. One

weapon he flinched and fled before, and that was ridicule. He had not, like the "Cigarette," become hardened to knocks and blows dealt by tongue as well as fists in the rough-and-tumble of a band of brothers and the playfield. When R. L. S., greatly taken up with his advocate's gown and wig, came tripping past, a wag in the Parliament House, who had gathered around him an audience at one big fire-place, and who surveyed him with his elfin locks appearing below the wig, remarked, "Oh, here is that gifted boy, the new Chatterton." R. L. S. turned and fled, wounded. He frequented the Calton Cemetery, where he roved when unhappy; he prided himself that he resembled Fergusson, the misunderstood poet. He had wandered about the Calton, meditating on this at one period, but to be joked at before these bewigged confreres and compared to another unfortunate poet, upset him. He very nearly cut his hair after that. The picturesqueness of the Parliament House he appreciated. There were quiet nooks to sit and read in with the great library beneath his feet, but soon he wearied of it and remained in his study at home, writing. He left off going to the Parliament House, where, in a rhyming epistle in broad Scots, addressed to Charles Baxter, he says :—

"Aft I saw
Whaur Advocates, by twa and twa,
Gang gesterin' end to end the ha'
In wig an' goon,
To crack o' what ye wull but Law
The hale forenoon."

He would come into our library to tell how his day's work with his essays had progressed, sometimes satisfied with it, or at other times despondent and wanting heartening. Great was the interest taken in these writings as they appeared in various papers. Some say he was not appreciated in his native town, but they were read with wonderment at the rhythm and style he already commanded. It was R. L. S., an inconsequent, eager, emotional youth with a peculiar accent of the mind, that his friends approved of, and "looking back, I can discern in part we loved the thing he was for some shadow of what he was to be." R. L. S. wanted to know why people he was at one with enjoyed things he did not fancy. He was amused at some hobbies of his friend the Bart., who read carefully and thoroughly what he especially fancied. He wrote a little, many things unpublished; but his *Art of Golf* shows he could wield a pen as well as a club. He seriously set himself to acquire proficiency in golf and whist after he joined the Bar, and accomplished his object. Inborn in him was a love for animals, also a love of sea and boats, for the grandfather whose name he bore was a skipper. Birds suited town life, and he had an aviary off his library. R. L. S. watched his friend dallying with these pets. The siskins refusing the liberty given them and returning to be fed, noisily demanding entrance, appealed to him. From admiration to imitation he came, in a whirl

of excitement to say he could not live without birds, and had bought a cageful. For a week he was ofttimes running in to deliver bulletins as to their behaviour and regretting he had never thought before of adding this joy to existence. He expatiated as he stood (he seldom sat) smoking endless cigarettes, on the delight it was to be greeted by chirrups of welcome by these affectionate creatures. His friend sat in his own special red rocking-chair and never interrupted the talker; but as he knocked the ashes out of his meerschaum and looked lovingly at its enriching colouring, there was a glint of fun in his blue eyes. He knew R. L. S. well by then, and knew this excessive exuberance over the new-found joy was one of his many innocent poses. The climax came more suddenly than was expected. The birds in their cage, little, frightened, shivery, foreign things, with their owner, arrived shortly after breakfast. "Oh, for any sake, take them from me," pled a desperate R. L. S. "I can't thraw their necks; they've got on my nerves with their eternal twittering, and sit all huddled up till they make me shiver with cold as if I were in a scowthering blast when I'm sitting in a frowsty room for their sakes." Outdoor sports did not appeal to R. L. S.; he very occasionally handled a rod, and never was seen to wield a golf club. As a boy one summer he rode on a pony at Peebles in company with other children; but we never could tempt him to mount a horse when he was in the

heart of his twenties, even with promises of leaving the beaten track and riding from Cramond to Granton Quarry by the sands. Skating when King Frost reigned he enjoyed, especially if Duddingston was bearing. He was no great performer on the ice, but enjoyed watching the exhilarating scene and lending an ear to the special Scotch parlance of the curlers. The Bart. was an expert figure skater and belonged to the Club, and Stevenson envied their graceful twirls and twists. There were no winter sports resorts in these days; but Sir Walter, being keen on skating, had a project of going over at Christmas to Holland, and R. L. S. was anxious to be of the company, though he spoke the truth when he said he skated backwards best. The Holland trip fell through, but it suggested foreign travel. Stevenson and my brother had been abroad together in vacations. The former wrote to his mother from Frankfort 1872: "Simpson and I seem to get on very well together; we suit each other capitally, and it is an awful joke to be living (two would-be advocates and one a baronet) in this supremely mean abode." Both were blessed with good tempers and easy to live with, and, if of different bents of minds, agreed to differ; so they journeyed amicably together. R. L. S., mountebankish, fancy in dress, was, if possible, more noticeable abroad, at least more troublesome. In Britain he was classed as a foreigner or a poor actor; across the Channel he was classed as a spy, and "the

SIR WALTER SIMPSON, BART.

police everywhere," he complained, "but in his native city, at him looked askance." Walter in his schoolroom days had been noted and praised for keeping himself always trig and tidy, and when he took walks abroad with his brother advocate Louis Stevenson, the contrast in dress and appearance between the two was accentuated. Sir Walter was fair as a Norseman, always shaven and shorn, spruce and well groomed. He was unmistakably British, and his face was his passport. Though he suffered from his friend's bizarre taste, his losing money and luggage, as a rule, never did he complain but patiently helped Louis out of his many misfortunes. For some summers, fond of the sea, Sir Walter and another advocate had shared a schooner, *The Heron*, which they mostly worked themselves, and yachted on the West Coast. In 1874 R. L. S. was their guest, and the ill-health of which he complained improved or vanished when, with Simpson for skipper, he served his apprenticeship as a hand and roughed it. At one place waiting for favourable winds, for something to do on shore, they watched the Oban-bound steamer disgorge her passengers. Stevenson proposed that 1s. per head should be paid by the other two for any arriving visitor whom they could shake hands with. Charles Baxter then tried to claim acquaintance with several new-comers, but, despite all his commanding presence, bland assurance of manner, he could not wring a handshake from one of his

imagined friends who were luggage-laden with bags and umbrellas. R. L. S., not to be behindhand, glided forward, bowing and smiling to perturbed passengers and tried to coax them to greet him; but with his strange appearance in his ragamuffin attire he was scowled at, threatened with the one policeman, and told to go away. Suddenly my brother, who had been watching with amusement his friends' bold, fruitless efforts, rose, alert, from his seat on a belaying-pin, with a smile twitching at the corner of his mouth, and stepped up to the gangway. He had spied a large family he knew, about to disembark, and, casting his shyness to the winds, wrung each of them ecstatically by the hand. "There are eight girls, father and mother, a governess," said Charles Baxter, in a sad tone of voice to R. L. S. "Look! he is carrying the basket with the cat the cook had, and I believe he is going to shake hands with all the servants." By the time Walter had piloted his friends ashore, packed them all into a waiting omnibus and helped the servants with their bundles, he found he had won 15s. from each of his friends, who pretended to be inconsolable and wrathful at his luck. R. L. S. said he would invent no more games for idle afternoons.

It was a hardy life, but the weather, one or two seasons in succession, was damp and stormy; so by the library fire R. L. S. and he planned to sail further south and try and reach more sunbright climes. In the summer, for years, my brothers had

kept canoes at Granton and sailed and paddled on the Forth. R. L. S. had taken passage on a double canoe with the Bart. They coasted up to the Hawes Inn, Queensferry, famed in the *Antiquary*. R. L. S. liked the four-in-hand old coach that lumbered out with Her Majesty's mails for Dunfermline to Queensferry before the days of the Forth Bridge. But he was also mightily pleased with this sea mode of travel, so when *The Heron* was abandoned and the skating party to Holland fell through, the two dilettante advocates, with an inclination to skim over foreign waters, bethought themselves of a canoe trip abroad and trusted to having more sunshine and less damp than they had encountered along the mist-shrouded shores of Scotland. They started in 1876 on their tour. R. L. S., like a child, knew no fear, always ready to adventure. He had had comparatively no experience of canoeing, but hopefully bold at Antwerp Docks, he tells simply: "The *Cigarette* went off in a splash and a bubble of small breaking-water. Next moment the *Arethusa* was after her." How they fared on this "Inland Voyage," readers of R. L. S. know full well. Many agreed the "Cigarette" was a courageous man to start with so precious and frail an only son, a quite inexperienced paddler. But with that sanguineness which was the backbone of his spare frame, R. L. S. stood exposure and faced dangers marvellously. They were beset by rainy weather as at home. "It was odd how the showers began

when we had to carry the boats over a lock and must expose our legs. This is a sort of thing that really begets a personal feeling against nature," he records. "The 'Cigarette' had a mackintosh, which put him more or less above these contrarieties." Stevenson seemed determined to face the inclemency of the weather in an unprotected manner. He bitterly railed at weather, and took no measures to rebuff its buffets. At home he gibed at his native grim skies; abroad he faced it nobly: "Sitting in a ditch with canoe aprons over their knees, lightheartedly"; but he says, "People well steeped and stupefied in the open air are in a good vein for laughter." The "Cigarette" tried cooking eggs with a spirit stove, broke one, "but, observing pleasantly that it might still be cooked *à la papier*, he dropped it into the Etna, in its covering of Flemish newspaper. It was found to be a cold and sordid fricassee of printer's ink and broken egg-shell; and henceforward, the Etna voyaged like a gentleman in the locker of the *Cigarette*." It was on this expedition R. L. S. was struck with the idea how easy life would be in travelling—instead of a canoe, which slipped from under him and left him and his paddle on a branch, twittering with cold—to have a barge. No more weary tramping at night hunting for lodgings, sacks on back, and being rejected as pedlars. The second experience of this kind upset even the good-humoured, "imperturbable 'Cigarette.'" Sometimes in

Edinburgh, longing for a sniff of the sea, the Bart. wandered about Leith Docks, and there the comfortable look of the Dutch ships, with muslin-curtained little square windows in their ample sterns, and the perpetual freshness of their paint, made him think a barge would be a pleasant mode of travel. The idea took the peripatetic Stevenson's fancy. Sir Walter, on board the *Cigarette*, told the "Arethusa" how, in his mind's eye, he had arranged in his cabin, his books, his pipe, his tobacco jar, his favourite chair as at home in his library—a library Stevenson talked brilliantly in many a winter's evening. He said he would have his birds and his dog with him, and keep his moving home in a faultless state of paint. "A water villa," as the "Arethusa" put it, seemed idyllic to the wet and homeless canoeist. He boarded one on the "Inland Voyage," and as their "fleet and footless beasts of burthen" bore them along, planned an easy journey through the canals of Europe, sure at any rate of a roof over their heads. This idea was mooted at Fontainebleau; a company of artists purchased the *Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne* in which they were to glide through Europe; but in the end the beast of burden, Sir Walter, rebelled when he was left by the impecunious artists with the entire costs, the other shareholders being short of funds, and he sold the barge, sorry to give up the notion of yachting inland in comfort. He said he would keep it for a provision for his old age,

which he never reached, for a gradually increasing illness sapped his strength. The "Cigarette" in these canoe days was patient, seldom lifted his voice in complaint, but he did once. He had had the heavy end of the work at some locks. The "Arethusa" had soothed himself with a pipe and met two men who mistook him for his companion's servant, and he wrote: "When I recounted this affair to the 'Cigarette,' 'They must have a curious idea of how English servants behave,' says he, drily, 'for you treated me like a brute beast at the lock.'" They got on well on water as on land, the quick-eyed note-taker whose log is the *Inland Voyage*, and his friend who became known to the reading public by his canoe's name. They had travelled a watery pathway together till the rains from above made the author cry out: "I was weary of dipping the paddle; I was weary of living on the skirts of life," so at Pontoise they drew up their canoes; but they had a sequel to their travels later—a foot journey in the valley of the Loing. Starting forth from Barbizon, "They walked separate, the 'Cigarette' plodding behind with some philosophy, the lean 'Arethusa' posting on ahead." The "Cigarette" had often suffered much from the "Arethusa's" choice of clothes. "The slim person of the 'Arethusa' is taken in the meshes," Stevenson complained, "while the rabble of British tourists pour unhindered over the Continent," and every absurd and disreputable means

of livelihood has been attributed to him in some heat of official or popular distrust. He suffered detention at the frontier. No one believed in his nationality. The "Cigarette" invariably wore pale grey flannel suits of unmistakable British tailoring. He once begged his friend before going with him to get a well-made tweed suit, which he did. But he chose so very light a colour that it was quickly spotted. He started on the epilogue of the "Inland Voyage" in a coat of this garb sadly the worse for wear, cheap ready-made linen trousers, a flannel shirt, the satirical called black, and a smoking-cap of Indian work for head-gear, the gold lace pitifully frayed and tarnished. He owns he was unwisely dressed. When at Maubeuge they stepped out of their eggshell pinnaces, the "Cigarette" was suspected of drawing fortifications, "a feat of which he was hopelessly incapable." They had twice, with their canoe luggage borne in sacks on their backs, been taken at night for pedlars, but they had finally wriggled out of dilemmas and found a haven. However, the attire of the "Arethusa" brought him to grief. He was going to bathe in the Loire, and await the even-paced "Cigarette," but he was arrested and cast from out of the sunshine into a darksome cellar. Meanwhile the prisoner comforted himself that the steady-going, punctual "Cigarette" was drawing near. "In those days of liberty and health he was the constant partner of the 'Arethusa' and had ample

opportunity to share in that gentleman's disfavour with the police. Many a bitter bowl had he partaken of with that disastrous comrade. He was a man born to float easily through life, his face and manner artfully recommending him to all. There was but one suspicious circumstance he could not carry off, and that was his companion." "At the town entry the gendarme culled him like a wayside flower." The Commissary was as surprised at the dapper appearance of the "Cigarette," his "unquestionable and unassailable manner," his pockets well filled with money (R. L. S. had a perpetual hole in his), his British passport stamped on him; and he, unashamed, claimed the captive as his comrade. The "Cigarette's" Casabianca stubbornness nearly doomed the poor "Arethusa" to longer captivity and caused his own. The "Cigarette" would not accept the title of Baron; he stuck to his humbler one. However, his unimpeachable neatness and his well-tailored clothes and the contents of his knapsack were all admired, and, having lived in Egypt and learned the necessity of bribery, seeing the official attracted by a volume of Michelet he had with him, he proffered it as a symbol of friendship, and the "Arethusa" was brought again into the sunlight; but they had to cease their tramp and take the train to Paris, "and at noon the next day the travellers were telling their misadventures in the dining-room at Sirons." This Sirons was at Barbizon, where

R. A. M. Stevenson and a brother of Sir Walter's, both artists, had a foothold, and thither the two Edinburghers came. An American, writing in a well-known transatlantic magazine, described the "Cigarette" rather aptly, as "Sir Salter Wimpson the Baronet with neat legs, who sat and read Kant in that artistic Bohemian circle." Though among artists none sketched Stevenson's "long hatchet-face and haunting gaze" except Mr Low, who made him plump and light-haired—the dust of Fontainebleau roads must have been on his head. The two Edinburgh advocates who did not trouble themselves about briefs enjoyed the Forest and their company of earnest but irresponsible artists. Will H. Low, who had poems made to him in *Underwoods*, was of the circle. He wrote lately a *Chronicle of Friendships*, which gives vivid pictures of R. A. M. and R. L. Stevenson in these days; and later he met the author in his native America. He says of Stevenson at Barbizon: "He was much with Walter Simpson, and as I had for a time work to do in the Forest, the two friends would often accompany me. Here while I worked they would lie prone on the ground, basking in the sunshine, or from my station would take short walks, returning late in the day, when we would walk homeward together." Barbizon was in highest favour for long; but the "Cigarette" liked boating and bathing and, having explored, he found Grez beyond the immediate Forest to his taste and migrated there to

Chevillions Inn; and at Montigny, where there was a pottery of pretty china, Low set up house with "a bin of wine and a river at his garden's end," as in 'L'envoi' of *Underwoods*. R. L. S. was busy compiling the *Inland Voyage* all the following winter. It was published in 1878, and on one of the first copies he sent, in clear writing, to Cummy with this inscription a foreword to the dedication in the *Garden of Verses*:—

"My Dear Cummy,—If you hadn't taken so much trouble with me all the years of my childhood, this little book would never have been written. Many a long night you sat up with me when I was ill. I wish I could hope, by way of return, to amuse a single evening for you with my little book! But whatever you may think of it, I know you will continue to think kindly of—The Author."

As the *Arethusa* in its log says: "There should be nothing so much a man's business as his amusement." The pity of it is, he took very few relaxations. As he went on this sequel to their canoeing trip, he made "roundelays" which puzzled the commissary when found in his knapsack. All the time he was walking, canoeing, cruising, he was working and noting down all he saw in his mind. The painters' camp at Barbizon was very congenial to him, but though he had off days there, he wrote and wrought also. The *Inland Voyage* came out in the spring of 1878, in its pale blue cover and

the black poplars to the left of the golden course the canoes had followed. There is an engraving inside, of Walter Crane's, Pan piping in the reeds by the river as the slim English boats went by, and on the horizon the Burns Louis noted ploughing before the *Arethusa* slipped from him and left him clinging to a branch over an angry river. Mr Stevenson senior approved of the book, which his wife called her first grandson. It and its successor, *Through the Cevennes*, became known in his house as his "after-luncheon bibles." They were kept on a small table opposite the Books used for morning "worship"; he dipped into them with pleasure as he rested after his midday meal. As the "Inland Voyage" log was being written, and accepted, its author was planning this Cevennes trip. But, as he says in the preface of his first book, he was sure of one reader—"the friend who accompanied me, if it were only to follow his own travels alongside mine." They journeyed constantly in company for a decade. Grez had influenced one future course, for there R. L. S. met first Mrs Osbourne, afterwards to be his wife; and her stepdaughter, his coming amanuensis; and Sam. Lloyd Osbourne, known at Grez when he joined other boys in catching minnows, etc., and cooking them on his sister's hairpin, calling them in his American-French lingo *petit feesh*. R.L.S.'s wayfaring took him afar across the Atlantic and then to live in the South. His friend the "Cigarette"

married also, and finally left Edinburgh, when his health, which had been a strong point, began to fail him. The friends met but a few times more in London and at Bournemouth, and the bond of friendship, though they lived far apart, was strong. "The Art of Golf" which the "Cigarette" expounded in a volume now rare, and which he practically studied with such perseverance that, becoming thereat a creditable craftsman, he found pleasure in it to the last. Some two years after the "Arethusa's" death, this diffident but honestly candid comrade, the "Cigarette," also "crossed the bar."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH
DRAMA AND DOUBLES

"There is many a way to win in this world, but none of them is worth much without good hard work to back it."

MARK TWAIN.

whose society had influenced Stevenson considerably when he was first an advocate, was William Ernest Henley, whose acquaintance he made in February 1875. He records, "Leslie Stephen, who was down here to lecture, called on me, and took me up to see a poor fellow, a poet who writes for him, and who has been eighteen months in our Infirmary, and may be for all I know eighteen months more. Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs, and the poor fellow sat up in his bed with his hair and beard all tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he had been in a king's palace, or the great King's palace of blue air." Henley's descriptions in *Rhymes and Rhythms*, "In Hospital," which appeared originally in *Cornhill*, give those who read them an unforgettable picture of himself and his neighbours in Syme's Ward when he was a patient in the Old Infirmary, situated in Infirmary Street. He wanted books. "The Staff Nurse, new style" (not the old one with the broad Scots tongue that flatters, scolds, defies), "who talks Beethoven, frowns disapprobation at Balzac's name, sighs it at poor George Sands," objected to some of Henley's literature, and still more so did the tract-laden visitors. Stevenson came hot-foot down to the Bart.'s, to enlist readily given practical sympathy for this new find. His library was ransacked to yield French and other books. The impetuous R. L. S. then and there

sprawled up to higher shelves to reach some volumes. He dropped them down clumsily, to the rage of the mastiff in the corner, who uncoiled himself and, with an ancient terrier, who had also been disturbed, arose and looked hungrily at the spidery climber. Finally, R. L. S. hung not a foot from the ground in terror, unknowing how far he had to drop, or if the irritated pack would not rend him when he reached the carpet. Much laughter rang out from the onlookers; but his host, seeing his fear was real, not assumed, and being always ready to pity and succour the weakly, rose and helped him down. He scaled his shelves himself with his sailor-like aptitude. He bowled the books on to soft seats, while R. L. S. lay recovering on the sofa, vowing Henley would have to subsist on tract literature, for never again would he ascend that bookcase, and abused the Bart. for his selfish neglect in not keeping a ladder for feebler mortals by which they might reach the topmost height. A concordance of the Bible was another thing he found fault with him for not having. Once wanting to verify some quotation from One he called the "Author of the Bible," he amused himself by drawing most laughable word-pictures of the Bart. on a sick-bed, growing rapidly worse, wishing to find a text, but unable to do so because of the lack of a concordance. Stevenson, Baxter, and Simpson often visited Henley, and a close comradeship was established between them. Of

Henley, as Burly in *Talk and Talkers*, R. L. S. states : " It has been said of him that his presence could be felt in a room you entered blindfold. There is something boisterous and piratic in Burly's manner of talk which suits well enough with this impression."

Henley was a stern taskmaster, an unflinching critic, unsparing of trouble when labouring to show how work could be improved. Stevenson felt he learned much from his strictures and his hard-to-win approbation. Henley described him, to the indignation of many, as "The Stevenson I nursed in secret hard by the Old Bristo Port, till he could make shift to paddle the *Arethusa*." "On my tomb, if ever I have one, I mean to get these words inscribed : 'He clung to his paddle,'" R. L. S. says when, after a morning of exhilarating canoeing on the Oise, he was left on a branch of a tree as his canoe, without him, fled on. The "Cigarette" had noted a ploughman on the hill-top, like a "toy Burns who had ploughed up a mountain daisy," and the clinger to the tree branch later thought, "A poor figure I must have presented to Burns with his team." The paddle he clung to, we know, was his pen, and Henley helped him to "paddle" into fame with it, as the "Cigarette" taught him to navigate the Forth to Queensferry. If the "Cigarette" was bluntly honest, curbing him at times with the thick Scots wit that fells you like a mace, when he

attitudinised or started off on some unballasted campaign, Henley was equally candid as to the merit of his work, and saw how it could be improved, for he was a gifted stage manager of manuscript. At a glance he realised what could be omitted, what brought into prominence, though he proved to have little stagecraft for plays. Unfortunately, after Stevenson's official biography was published, Henley boldly wrote a criticism in the *Pall Mall Magazine* of what he judged to be too idealised a picture of R. L. S. He was wearied with the adulation of an adoring public, and a perfectly angelic conception of his friend. Graham Balfour, he allows, "has done his best"; but unfortunately he raised his voice after Stevenson's death. Those who knew Henley, knew he would have said the same to his friend's face. He could not stand him being made into "a seraph in chocolate," "a barley-sugar effigy of a real man." Henley and Stevenson had a give-and-take straightforward intimacy for thirteen years, and each found "faithful are the wounds of a friend." A writer complains, "Stevenson's books have been spoiled to me by the noise his friends make about them, and his woes and courage," and another, writing on the "Evolution of Heredity," who knew R. L. S. in his Edinburgh days, remarks, "The delicate, bright boy is now the *St Louis* of the young literary Presbyterian cult." It was this humbugging saintship Henley

tilted against, and he loved a fight. He went into it with a Berserker's fury and revelled, never flinching, as he faced the storm aroused by his attack or defence, whichever it may be called, of the true R. L. S. he knew.

Henley did not afterwards go any farther when in the *Pall Mall Magazine* he objected so loudly to R. L. S. going down to posterity as a "faultless monster" or an "angel clean from heaven." He added, "In the days to come I may write as much as can be told of him." It is a pity he did not. Stevenson would not have suffered at his hands, and we would have had the most powerfully penned, realistic, and lovable picture of one he calls the "riotous, intrepid, scornful Stevenson." *Virginibus Puerisque* is dedicated to Henley. He was side by side with R. L. S. when he went, feather-footed, past the milestones of his third decade, when he explains to Henley, "There is hardly a stage of that distance, but I see you present with advice, reproof, or praise." They planned to collaborate together in writing for the stage. Both were in need of money. Stevenson had finished the narrative of his *Travels with a Donkey*, and stayed at Acton with Henley after selling Modestine, and together they began their work on Deacon Brodie, which, since he was nineteen, Stevenson had left untouched, and which Henley one day read and approved. R. L. S. wished to go to San Francisco, where Mrs Os-

bourne, whom he had met at Grez, was paving the way to their future by procuring a divorce. It was a comforting thought for Stevenson when he was a married man, as well as when he was a youth on a writing venture, that he had a father. Mr Thomas Stevenson paid for his son's travels when he, his wife, and her family went in search of health to Davos; but Stevenson wished to prove his own choice of a profession was remunerative, or at least self-supporting, so he bethought himself of the gold mine of the author—to compose for the stage. In all he wrote five plays: *Deacon Brodie*, *Beau Austin*, *Admiral Guinea*, *Macaire*, and *The Hanging Judge*—the last written in partnership with Mrs Stevenson, and never published. He planned many more, including one on Farmer George, in five acts, ending in a scene in which the old mad king, for a time, recovered his reason. There was another historical play on the Gunpowder Plot, besides some sixteen more he left a list of. These he never progressed with, but the boy Austin he brought up (Mrs Strong's son), perhaps by reason of the literary training he got at Vailima, has written plays popular in London, among them *The Toymaker of Nuremberg*. Quoting from Sir Arthur Pinero's lecture given at the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, 1903, on R. L. Stevenson as a Dramatist, he states *Deacon Brodie*, though acted in America "with indifferent success," was a failure this side

THE SHOP IN LEITH WALK, WHERE "PENNY PLAIN
TWOPENCE COLOURED" WERE BOUGHT

of the Atlantic. *Beau Austin* was performed a score of times, and *Admiral Guinea* less. "Now," he said, "I wish to inquire why it is that these two men, both, in their different ways, of distinguished talent, combining with great gusto and hopefulness to produce acting dramas, should have made such small mark with them either on or off the stage." "The theatre is the gold mine: on that I must keep an eye," Stevenson wrote in 1883 to his father. The lust for money was on him—what he calls a "mercantile delight" seized hold of him. The stage as a puppet-show had long held him in thrall, though he seldom went to the theatre. He accused Cummy of trying to make an actor of him by teaching him to dramatically recite hymns. When he told a sad tale, his eyes, "so often radiant with vivacity," wore a sombre, sorrowful look. He emphasised the recital of the simplest episode with speaking gestures. With his unshorn locks, scrimp, scuffed velvet coat, and an excessive amount of embroidery of manner, doffing his hat when asking which way to take, he was constantly being mistaken for a starveling actor. His essay "Penny plain, Twopence coloured" recalled the stationer's shop where blood-curdling "budgets of romance" lay in a pile, and all Skelt's Juvenile Dramas were "a roll-call of stirring names." He enlarges on his childish love for a toy theatre. This stationer's is on the broad thoroughfare that links Edinburgh to the sea, up

which trudged on his way to the High School, Lewis Balfour, R. L. S.'s grandfather, when Leith Walk was still a country road. Louis Stevenson, as a small boy, used to stand on Saturday at this enticing corner, staring into the small-paned, old-fashioned bow window, where, all the year round, there stood displayed a theatre in working order, with a "forest set," a "combat," and a few "robbers carousing in the slides." He owns that he was a puppet of Skelt. He turned his penny plain into colour with his paint-box, and, among the echoes of the past, recalled himself, a bright-eyed but hesitating child, expending after much thought, in the dark "bible-smelling" shop, his Saturday pocket-money, Mr Smith, the owner, reprimanding him for taking so long to make up, what he was pleased to call, his mind. He was not a theatre-goer in Edinburgh, but Salvini as Macbeth in 1876 made a deep impression on him. The Fleeming Jenkins' annual theatricals always found him of their company. He joined them in the days when he was discontented and gloomy, when he posed as being misunderstood and wretched, because his home was in the North, where his hereditary trade awaited him, while he wished to be a man of letters and live in the South. He had not learned, as a writer says, "that happiness, like health, can be had for the wanting, but you must want it so intensely that other wants have to be abandoned." The social gaiety at the

Jenkins', fraternising with others of his own station, did him a world of good, and he enjoyed the time of rehearsals ; but curiously enough he was a poor actor on the stage, though off it he spoke with dramatic force. He had never any important parts assigned to him. "The streak of Puck" Henley speaks of in his poetic description of him, came flashing out after one of these performances. Applause was long and loud, the curtain was raised again and again. R. L. S., quick of thought and action, suggested if cheers continued, the actors should be found taking their ease, and with a few empty beer bottles and tumblers, hastily culled from the pantry, dispersed among them. The curtain rose to find the Greeks resting their feet on chairs, and signs of modern refreshment of a pot-house order handy. Professor Fleeming Jenkin was annoyed at the "Gifted Boy's" manner of meeting exuberant applause, but the audience enjoyed the joke. For a person who seemed to be swayed by the interests of the moment, who had a wayward, flighty manner, bursting with enthusiasm over some revelation he had to make one day, and the next day abandoning it, R. L. S. was very staunch to his often hastily formed friendships, and to certain ideas which, as he paced deliberately through his ages, getting the heart out of a liberal education, remained fixed in his head. It was but natural that his first and last books should be memories

of the Pentlands which looked on the city of his childhood, which were big, overshadowing neighbours at Colinton, over which he rambled when an author in embryo learning to know every dell which dimpled them. He meditated on another chronicle of the hills of home, *The Killing Time*, for he had brought to remembrance how about the graves of martyrs the whaups are crying. Rathillet, with his cloak about his mouth, haunted him from the time he crossed Magus Moor as a boy; and yet another tale took hold of his tindery, boyish imagination and smouldered there, flaring up from time to time, and that was of Deacon Brodie. As early as 1864 he prepared the draft of a play founded upon it. It was at various times recast, and finally acted in 1883. Henley and he repeatedly attacked it, and after "a desperate campaign," as one author said, brought out the melodrama as *Deacon Brodie, or The Double Life*. "We were both young men," says Stevenson, "and I think we had an idea that bad-heartedness was strength." Again he says he liked to hear the clash of swords as he had done when "keen on 'Skeltery.'" In New York *The Deacon* was believed to be a copy of *The House on the Marsh*, *Jim the Penman*, or even to be founded on the career of Peace. The Deacon had existed in print for years, and the Americans were assured he was moreover a true character. William Brodie was Convener of the Deacons of the Wrights—not a Presbyterian Church digni-

tary on his apprenticeship to be an elder. The Stevensons had a near ancestor, Deacon of the Wrights of Glasgow, David Lillie—his daughter was the mother of Robert Stevenson, who built the Bell Rock Lighthouse, the grandfather of R. L. S. Deacon Brodie, if we judge by his house in Lawnmarket, which is there to testify to this, must have been a well-to-do man. The arched doorway to the pend bears his name, Brodie's Close. The rooms are large, the roofs lofty and heavily corniced, the fireplaces quaint and olden. There is a turret stair within the flat. It is now a furniture store, and is of such ample dimensions, even to our present notions, that, when people still crowded into the Old Town with every room in high *lands* filled, the Deacon must have been a man of means to own this well-situated mansion. He was an able craftsman. The cabinets he built were of the best, and Mr Thomas Stevenson owned one. Thus inquisitive 'Smoutie' of Heriot Row knew all about this man who deceived his fellow-citizens by the mask he wore. Outwardly he was a respected and respectable citizen whose integrity no one doubted. In truth he was a depraved profligate as well as a criminal. He gambled, using loaded dice, and thus added to his ill-gotten gains. Not till 1786 did he take up the rôle of house-breaker, and he was suspected also of being a murderer. In some of his low haunts he met three men, Smith, Brown, and

Ainslie, who became his tools and helpers. A series of robberies of houses and shops startled Edinburgh. The thieves seemed to know by magic where the stores of valuables were. The keys of shops hung during the day in observable position in the warehouses, so the wily Deacon easily took the impress of them in his wax-lined hands. Often he was on the verge of being discovered. There are tales of his bold effrontery, and of people unable to believe their own senses. "Many stories," says R. L. S. in *Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh*, "are told of this redoubtable Edinburgh burglar, but the one I have in my mind most vividly gives the key of all the rest. A friend of Brodie's, nested some way towards heaven in one of the great *lands*, had told him of a projected visit to the country, and afterwards, detained by some affairs, put it off, and stayed the night in town. The good man had lain some time awake; it was far on in the small hours by the Tron bell; when suddenly there came a creak, a jar, a faint light. Softly he clambered out of bed, and up to a false window which looked into another room, and there, by the glimmer of a thieves' lantern, was his good friend the Deacon in a mask. It is characteristic of the town, and of the town's manners that this little episode should have been quietly tided over. But still, by the mind's eye, he may be seen, a man harassed below a mountain of duplicity, slinking from a magistrate's supper-

room to a thieves' ken, and pickeering among the closes by the flicker of a dark lamp."

In another case, a lady was kept at home by illness from her usual, invariable habit of church-going. When alone in Sabbath quiet, her house was entered by a thief with a crape mask, who, taking her keys, opened her desk, and possessed himself of her money. She remained silent with fright, but she thought as he went out, "That is Deacon Brodie." This idea seemed so absurd that she did not repeat it. Kay has left us portraits of this man who led a dual life, very trig in his long black coat reaching to the foot of his knee breeches. He wears his three-cornered hat in one picture, in another it is in his hand; and in both we note the seals to his watch chain, his immaculate tie, and frilled shirt. He was short in stature. His full wig framed a face which narrowed like that of a fox. In one portrait a gamebird is standing by him, symbolic of his love of cock-fighting. If he had not grown over-daring, he might have continued to visit his friends and customers, the interior of whose houses he knew, whose keys he handled with the knowledgableness of his trade; but when March storms were howling in the chimney cans of Auld Reekie in 1788, the Deacon had planned and proceeded to carry out a bold venture. He and his satellites were to rob the Excise Office in the neighbouring Chessels Close. He had visited the place on business, observed the cashier's room,

and taken a cast of the key. The Deacon was fey as he armed himself with a brace of pistols, and sang gaily from the *Beggars' Opera*,

> "Let us take the road.
> Hark! I hear the sound of coaches.
> The hour of attack approaches.
> To your arms, brave boys, and load."

He was going to turn the lead in his firearms to gold. He was supplied with several skeleton keys, and he also, we read, was decorously attired in black. All the thieves' faces were veiled, as were the villains in Skelt's dramas, in crape. They carried, it seems, clumsy burglary tools; one was the coulter of a plough stolen with this intent, to be used with a crowbar to force some inner door. Apparently Mr Brodie was still shielded from detection. They went early, as the Excise was visited by the guard at 10 p.m. A deputy solicitor returned unexpectedly to his office at 8.30. Brodie passed him in the very doorway, and the official went and came away again, unaware that Smith and Brown with cocked pistols were waiting to shoot, if he paused in the descent from his room. The burglars only got £16, in place of the expected thousands. Brown, having a previous warrant out against him, when the police were forced by this attack on Government property to bestir themselves, turned King's evidence. Then the Deacon had to drop his highly respected citizen's attitude, and fled. The sleuth-hounds of justice slowly ran him to earth in a cupboard in Amsterdam. He was brought back and

tried in the courts where, but a short time before, he had been an honoured juryman. The popular Honble. Henry Erskine defended him, with two other advocates. In vain he tried to prove an *alibi* on the fateful 5th March. He was tried before the judges of Justiciary, Lords Hailes, Eskgrove, Stonefield, and Swinton, who were contemporaries with Braxfield. He was condemned, with his accomplice Smith, and hanged on 1st October 1788. By an irony of fate, at his execution a gallows he had improved (doing away with the ladder and inventing the drop) was first used. He went unrepentant to the scaffold, hopeful of life, while seemingly facing death. A French quack physician, Dr Degraver, vowed he could resuscitate him, after hanging, by bleeding. Two of the Deacon's own men placed him in a cart, rattled him over the cobbles to the Lawnmarket; but the Frenchman's skill was unavailing: the hangman and the drop had done its work, though he had three times coolly superintended the lengthening of the rope, and with politeness pressed his companion Smith to try it first. He gaily said he was going to take a leap in the dark. The dual life of this man seems as if it were full of tragic interest; yet two distinguished men of letters of our time working on it together failed to succeed to form it into a melodrama, "though the psychological interest of the chief actor's character and the dramatic elements in which his career abounded appeal to all, and

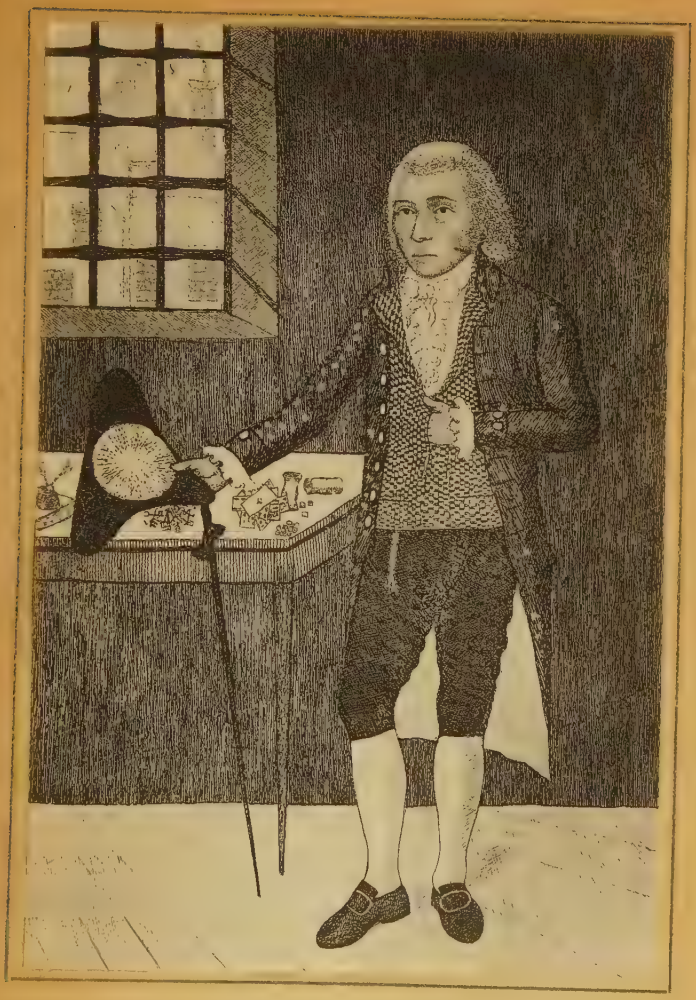
so long as human nature remains the same, so will the story of the Deacon's downfall be accorded an indulgent hearing." In the detailed account of this trial the mask is taken off the Deacon's character and his many crimes; his notoriously bad life is left exposed. The Deacon was buried at Buccleuch Street, in a graveyard belonging to a Chapel of Ease to the West Kirk. This rascal lies in good Scots clods beside good Scots. Dr Adam, Rector of the High School, is his neighbour, along with Mrs Cockburn, who wrote the more modernised version of the *Flowers of the Forest*. His lantern and false keys the Court of Justiciary handed to the City of Edinburgh. They are still preserved as a souvenir of the Deacon of Wrights who deceived and robbed his neighbours. To find why his future distinguished fellow-townsman failed to make Deacon Brodie a success on the stage, we have to turn to Sir Arthur Pinero. As a piece of literature, Stevenson wrote, neither he nor Henley was ashamed of it. Sir Arthur says, "Dramatic, like poetic, talent is born, not made; if it is to achieve success on the stage, it must be developed into theatrical talent by hard study, and generally by long practice. Now, dramatic talent Stevenson undoubtedly possessed in abundance, and I am convinced that theatrical talent was well within his reach, if only he had put himself to the pains of evolving it."

Stevenson, we know, never grew up. He wanted

to play with Skelt's blood-curdling romances intended for the lowest class of theatrical audiences, but which had thrilled his boyish blood. Pinero explains he only played at being a playwright, and he was fundamentally in error in regarding the drama as a matter of child's-play. He wanted to amuse the public as he had amused himself with a pasteboard theatre and crude horrors.

The Deacon on the stage, pretending he had retired with a headache, soliloquises: "If we were as good as we seem, what would the world be? The city has its vizard on, and we—at night—*are our naked selves.*" Stevenson showed him too stark, too soon. Those who know hold it to be a harder task, needing a longer course of training, to produce a successful play than a successful novel. R. L. S. worked for years at what he calls "his things of clay" till they spread their "wings of life," but he, impetuously, never stopped to study the "kittle art" of drama. He had enjoyed his toy theatre to the full. "Indeed," he says, "as literature these dramas did not much appeal to me. I forget the very outlines of the plots." It was cutting out and painting the characters which interested the small boy—and that done, he wearied. Pinero explains that a play-book is but a slim pamphlet in comparison with a three-volume novel or a 6s. one. "Little do you guess that every page of the play has cost more care, severer mental tension, if not more actual manual labour, than any chapter

of a novel, though it be fifty pages long." With a boyish zest, returning to the things of long ago, but with an eye to mercantile value, R. L. S. took to play-writing and signally failed. We wonder how Henley, who possessed a knowledge and power over words unequalled and unrivalled, who edited so brilliantly, who saw at a glance what needed to be cut out, what altered, did not infuse into them the life they needed. They both deplorably lacked the art of stagecraft, yet Henley was a playgoer, and one abreast of modern methods and ideas—no pupil of Skelt's Surreyside melodramas. But the rich nuggets of the stage mine came to neither of these poets, essayists, or writers of engaging tales. Stevenson, we know, with boyish ardour thought the stage, as he knew it in pasteboard, a treasure island to be steered to gaily and easily, but Henley's failure to direct aright is incomprehensible. He gathered men round the papers he edited, "found them," trained them, and some of them are the richest and most popular play-writers of to-day. Henley after, again at Skerryvore, collaborating with Stevenson, bade adieu to his friend, who sailed forth in the *Ludgate Hill*. The novelist never met again his old comrades. They became to him, as he says, "an occasional crossed letter, very laborious to read. So in some way or other life forces men apart, and breaks up the goodly fellowship for ever." Henley was a man who had suffered much bodily tor-



DEACON BRODIE

ture. "The crippled Titan," one called him, yet so exuberant in energy, no one thought of him as a pain-suffering, stricken man. R. L. S. is held up as an example of heroic endurance and industry in face of sickness, but in this Henley outstripped him. Stevenson, with that captivating egotism of his which took you into his confidence, would often start an evening of brilliant talk with a health bulletin as to a vanished cold, delivered smilingly, and amusingly, if he was better. One who knew him in Samoa says, "It was his *good* health he took cheerfully. When he was not feeling well, Stevenson was a man who cheerfully damned the whole universe." Any illness which beset him had bulked before his childish eyes, and grown to huge proportions. The worshipped child was important, well; and if ill, his family hung anxiously over him. Henley never alluded to pain or his maimed state. As the master of his fate, gripped in the fell clutch of circumstance, he endured without a visible tremor the bludgeonings he received. His unconquerable soul he truly had to be thankful for, for later another sorrow fell on him. He had a little daughter, like a picture of a child saint, with an aureole of golden hair, a child who won all hearts by her beauty of soul, as well as face. Everyone who met her felt the glamour of her presence. She was so dignified, yet so simple, it was no surprise that she seemingly was "loaned to earth" but for a short while, and soon after

the Henleys left Edinburgh for London she died. She had been born and lived her brief years a few doors from R. L. S.'s birthplace. Even the people who knew her only by sight invariably looked up to her window to see her, like a sun-ray in the grey street, and the tramwaymen who, passing her door every voyage, waved to her, grieved when they heard the bonnie bairn would not come again to travel with them. No pain of body or mind wrung a moan from Henley. He died 11th July 1903, and is buried beside his only child in the churchyard of Cockaine, Hatley. Stevenson and Henley, we see, with all their brains and skill of pencraft failed to produce a true picture of Deacon Brodie. They showed him up at once as the villain, not as an honoured, trusted citizen. *The Double Life*, as the play's second name was, dwelt for years in Stevenson's mind. "Our naked selves" was his study. Insatiable curiosity made him wish to tear the mask from everyone. Praise and laudation were being heaped upon a great man whose obituary notices filled the papers. "I wonder if he likes God—I don't think he will," was the only comment R. L. S. made, with that smile "a little tricksy and mocking," which his early friend, Mr Baildon described. "There's something in hypocrisy after all. If we were as good as we seem, what would the world be?" the Deacon of the play asserts. Often, in the years when the "Cigarette" and the "Arethusa" were much together, holiday-

ing in summer or wintering in Edinburgh, Stevenson would smoke and talk before our library fire. He would pace up and down, flourishing his hands, stepping carefully with his head poked forward and nodding till we nicknamed him the Guinea-fowl, and expatiate on the double life, speaking again and again of the Deacon. He would wonder what burglary some esteemed citizen of his own day was guilty of in (to quote his Deacon) "the grim, cynical night that makes all cats grey, and all honesties of one complexion. Shall a man not have half a life of his own? not eight hours of twenty-four? Eight shall he have, should he dare the pit of *Tophet*. Only the stars to see me, I'm a man once more till morning." This double of us all remained with R. L. S. He never saw how to materialise into print this idea of the mixture of evil as well as good in the best of us. The Brownies of his Brain, he avers, made him dream of it. It had lurked in his head for years. In reading mid-Victorian books on Edinburgh, Chambers's *Traditions*, Wilson's, Cassell's, it strikes one as singular no mention is made of Colinton in connection with R. L. S., or Swanston, as we have grown so accustomed to the "Benjamin of Edinburgh's literary sons" being connected with the city of his birth. But in one book comparatively recently published, Deacon Brodie is spoken of very aptly as "the Jekyll and Hyde" of Edinburgh. Finally, Stevenson wrote his conception of the double life. His Brownies who help-

ed him suggested the last phase, the potion in the cupboard. Subconscious Brownies remembered how Deacon Brodie had been run to earth in a cupboard—truth is as strange as fiction. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* opens with a description of Mr Utterson, "cold, scanty, and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary, and yet somehow lovable. At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beaconed from his eyes; something which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face and more often loudly in the acts of his life." Mr Graham Balfour states that Mr Mowbray, legal adviser of the Stevenson family, "a grim, dry, warm-hearted old bachelor, was, I have always fancied, the original of Mr Utterson."

R. L. S. bore pictures of people and ideas in his mind for years. Mr Mowbray may have been sorry for Mr and Mrs Stevenson with but one son, so fragile, so petted, and pampered, on whom their hopes and hearts were centred. When the boy grew into a youth who isolated himself from companionship of those of his station and his years, who sought strange friends, who propounded unorthodox views which hurt his father, the friendly veteran came into touch with the perverse youth. He had patience with him, and was purposely blind to his many eccentricities. The older man

with his trained gaze—for he had studied people as well as deeds—saw in his friend's son's boasted atheism and rebellion at religion, that though the road might wind and wind through many creeds, R. L. S. had his feet set on the right way, for he had learned "the art of being kind, which is all this sad world needs." "I incline to Cain's heresy," Dr Jekyll's lawyer used to say quaintly: "I let my brother go to the devil in his own way." Young Stevenson doubtless heard Mr Mowbray make such a remark at his father's table. The austere lawyer who quietly helped those down in their luck was very tolerant to him. He had not the responsibility of his upbringing and future, as had his sterling client, Mr T. Stevenson. Lord Glenesk had the same influence and interest in Archie Weir. Stevenson had, by the time he delineated Jekyll and Hyde, written steadily for many years. His magazine articles were gathered into volumes, and contain some of his best work, showing him to have truly earned the titles of the Master Stylist and the Virgil of Prose. He had also written two volumes of his travels: one in the *Arethusa*, and the other with Modestine, the diminutive burden-bearer of the Cevennes—two books as likely to become classics as *The Sentimental Journey*. In the latter Walter Crane has again a frontispiece, which, small as it is, has a characteristic likeness to the biped traveller—especially as he mounts the hill-top, lean, high-

shouldered, stooping forward. But those had not paid. His father had in 1884 bought in the copyright of his first three books. The *Travels with a Donkey* had gone into a third edition, the *Inland Voyage* into a second, and of his essays only 900 sold. Mr Thomas Stevenson bought the rights of all for £100. The public he had been so long pursuing in print, he overtook, and they adopted him straightway. Thackeray said, "A reviewer in the *Times* caught the great stupid public by the ear." Jekyll and Hyde did this for R. L. S. The public thought they had found him. His friends and a small reading circle had discovered he could write; but now he became a popular, a successful author. Clergymen preached of him in connection with this story. "They had preached on Pamela 140 years earlier, so they called the attention of their flocks to Jekyll and Hyde," says Andrew Lang, who tells us, "The idea of the double life had long haunted Stevenson. He told me once he meant to write a story about a fellow who was two fellows, which did not, when thus stated, seem a fortunate idea." The record of his travels had brought him little gain, his essays and briefer stories little renown, but Jekyll and Hyde came with their hands full of the money reward he had hoped to skim as a passing pastime off the surface of the gold mine he thought so easy to exploit, viz. the art of writing for the stage. "No," wrote Stevenson to Mr Colvin from Samoa,

"I will not write a play for Irving, nor for the devil. Can you not see that the work of falsification which a play demands is of all tasks the most ungrateful? And I have done it for a long while, and nothing ever came yet." Irving's son, however, has acted the *Double Life* with wonderful skill and placed R. L. S.'s dual hero triumphantly on the stage.

The first draft of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, written in 1885, he burned, as his wife said it was too much of a story and was really an allegory. In three days this "fine bogie tale" rose from its ashes. The Brownies of his dreams hurried him on, suggested the story, the transforming powders, and he wrought hard to write down their message. The prototypes of Jekyll and Hyde are universal. The invisible playmate of childhood is our protective angel, and as we grow it fades away, and we are left with our double. It remains with us, whether the world knows us as Jekyll or Hyde.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH
OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

"What is history but a fable agreed upon?"
NAPOLEON.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

STEVENSON HAD STRUCK ON A streak of gold before he resolved to delve into the stage mine for its piles of wealth, for he had unawares found Treasure Island. In 1881, after being abroad some time, he came winging home to Scotland. Like his Highland hero, he "wearied for the heather"; so, with his mother, and his wife and stepson, he went to Pitlochry in June. He had written before his return and expressed a longing for a house of his own, not an hotel, he explained, or even an inn, for he was tired of both, wandering from Davos by Barbizon. With his usual good luck, his wish was granted: a cottage was found beside a "burn, heather, and a fir or two." He did not by any means idle, for in the two months there he wrote *Thrawn Janet*, *The Merry Men*, and *The Body Snatcher*. The Scottish superstitions possessed his mind and guided his pen. He felt their spell upon him, and revelled in turning out grisly tales. In August he and his party, which his father joined, moved on to the stronger air of Braemar. It was on the way there the Brownies of Stevenson's brain, who never let him rest, suggested *The Master of Ballantrae*, or rather the family of Durrisdeer. At Braemar he met Dr Japp, who proved to be a good genius. He proposed an introduction to an editor of a serial paper and took some chapters of *Treasure Island* away with him as a sample. The story, like Topsy, "just grew." Charts always interested Stevenson. He

had been brought up on them, as it were, seeing them in relation to the depth of water round dangerous reefs. He declared charts were to him "of all books the least wearisome to read, and the richest in matter." From this drawing which he made and coloured, jotting in names, he composed a hustling nautical yarn for his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, who had now grown from his *petit feesh* days into a stripling, and the literature which then engaged his attention, lying about, reminded Stevenson of his own Mayne Reid and Ballantyne days. An island with buried treasure, and a cut-throat crew, were both, of course, dear to a wiser youngster of to-day, and Mr Stevenson senior proved to be the bigger boy of the two. He took the story which was being mapped out under his wing at once. From him came the originals of *The Sea Cook*, as the coming tale was then called. Under his serious, granite exterior, he, like his son, ever remained young in spirit. Louis Stevenson had had the art of expression in him trained by years of work, for, as Mr Strachey says, he, "though generally only a decorative artist, a worker in arabesque and cunning ornamentation, rather than an artist who acts with a conscious purpose higher than that of using his medium of perfection, often unconsciously rises through the consummate perfection of his word-craft beyond the regions of mere sons of joy, and gives his hearers something far more real than pleasure. This lesson the loyal artist

teaches, even if he be unconscious of it." The author had inherited a fastidiousness in the use of words from his father, who, when his powers were failing, "would reject one word after another as inadequate, and leave his phrase unfinished rather than finish it without propriety." The senior Stevenson had a fluent but fastidious gift of language, and he also depicted scenes in a dramatic form. When a little lad, he put himself to sleep by the tales he invented, and he had resuscitated and repeated to his 'Smout' his boyhood's imaginings, till they were ingrained in Louis's memory. Once, when the child had locked himself into a room, while awaiting the locksmith, Thomas Stevenson told his son one of these stories through the keyhole. This was a novel way of hearing a thrilling tale, and the novelty and the story kept the nervous prisoner unaware he was in durance. It makes a unique picture: the serious engineer kneeling and carefully choosing his picturesque words, while emphasising the interview between a stage-coach guard and a highwayman. On the other side of the door the little Louis, with his ear to the keyhole, listening and nodding his head at a bit he liked, excitedly clapping or clasping his delicate hands. "A Scotch child hears much of shipwreck, outlying iron skerries, pitiless breakers, and great sea lights; much of heathery mountains, wild clans, and hunted Covenanters," writes R. L. S. in the *Foreigner at Home*, and we know of one who heard such.

When *The Sea Cook* began to take shape, Thomas Stevenson threw himself into the plans in his heart-whole way. Dr Japp took the first part to London, and it came out in *Young Folks* as *Treasure Island*, certainly a better name than the first one suggested. Stevenson was very particular and very happy in his choice of names for his heroes, but the titles for his books were not so ingenious, though he was amenable to suggestions—for instance, *Penny Whistles* he christened the *Child's Garden of Verses*, which was also begun at Braemar. He explained to Henley about his adventure story: "Two chapters are written and tried on Lloyd with great success; the trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths—bricks without straw. It's awful fun boys' stories; you must indulge the pleasure of your heart, that's all; no trouble, no strain." Later, when writing to him from Hyères about the proof in book form, he says: "I will now make a confession. It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot John Silver in *Treasure Island*. Of course, he is not in any other quality or feature the least like you, but the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you." This is one original in the now famed narrative. In 1883, when literary earnings were few, he was much rejoiced to get an offer of £100 from Cassell for the rights of this story. "A hundred jingling, tingling, golden minted quid. It has been to me

a Treasure Island verily," he exclaimed in glee. Mr Edmund Gosse, the sternly upreared young Plymouth Brother, who has given us such a minute description of his early years in *Father and Son*, was at Braemar, and in a note to his wife says: "Louis has been writing all the time I have been here, a novel of pirates and hidden treasure, in the highest degree exciting. He reads it to us every night chapter by chapter." "This," he goes on to explain, "of course, was *Treasure Island*, about the composition of which, long afterwards in Samoa, he wrote an account, in some parts of which I think his memory played him false. I look back to no keener intellectual pleasure than these cold nights at Braemar, with the sleet howling outside, and Louis reading his budding romance by the lamplight, emphasising the purpler passages with lifted voice and gesticulating finger." Jim Hawkins the daring boy, John Silver, the very Island, were all race gifts from his father. More stories were wanted for *Young Folk*, so *Black Arrow* followed. When *Treasure Island* appeared as a volume, Mr Gladstone became so immersed in the tale he forgot the affairs of State, and sat up all night reading it. Stevenson reports to his mother, "Lang dotes on *Treasure Island*. Except *Tom Sawyer* and the *Odyssey*," he says, "I never liked any romance so much." There had been, in this year when R. L. Stevenson did so much literary work in the Highlands, a talk of his applying for the

chair of History and Constitutional Law at Edinburgh University, about to be vacated by Professor Æneas Mackay. Perhaps with this in view Mr Thomas Stevenson brought to Braemar what his son calls "that blessed little volume my father bought for me in Inverness in the year of grace '81." It supplied the basis on which he built *Kidnapped*. "I really ought," he continues, "to have it bound in velvet and gold if I had any gratitude. And the best of the lark is Davie Balfour is not anywhere within the bounds of it. A pretty curious instance of the genesis of a book." R. L. S. had, like a patriotic Scotsman, gloried in the annals of his country, where, as he says, "Poverty, ill-luck, enterprise, and constant resolution are the fibres of the legends of the country's history." He carefully read the account of the tragedy enacted at Appin, and from it grew two of his novels. The so-called hero, David Balfour, was Stevenson's own relation. Alan Breck is really the principal person. He is in the pages of fiction dearly loved by all who meet him, including Charles Baxter's son, whom the author suggests in the dedication might be a reader of *Kidnapped*, with other young gentlemen who wish to be beguiled away from school worries before they take their rest. Alan Breck in the public mind has become so intimately associated with Stevenson's novel that most of us forget he actually lived. In fact, except that in the copious reports of the trial for the murder of the Campbell

called Colin Roy, or the Red Fox, there is no David Balfour. *Kidnapped* tells the tale as it is still told in Appin. In fiction the murdering shot is fired a year earlier. Fourteenth May 1752 was the fatal day and year. Perhaps to give David and Alan the better weather in which to make their escape to the Lowlands, Stevenson dates it nearer midsummer. The relative David visits was James Balfour of Pilrig, who lived to 1797, sometime Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University. His wife was Cecilia, fifth daughter of Sir John Elphinstone of Logie, by Mary, daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, and through this link R.L.S. claimed kinship with the Elliots who dwelt on the Debatable Land. For this reason he took pleasure in creating Kirstie's Four Black Brothers of Cauldstane Slap. He felt akin to them. Stevenson always believed he had a strong spiritual affinity to Robert Fergusson. There was a distant blood tie as well, through the marriage of Elphinstones and Forbeses. The author of *Kidnapped* called the stolid young relative he invented David, and did not know till after that it was a Balfour name. The Shaws, David's ruinous-looking inheritance at Cramond, being within such easy reach of Edinburgh, will now be a valuable possession for Alan Stewart Balfour's descendants, while Pilrig House, the Balfour home, has fallen somewhat on evil days and got embedded among factories and railway sidings. Stevenson knew the

road from Cramond to Queensferry well. In some lines of Henley's addressed to the "Cigarette" on a drive there, he speaks of bowling

> "Along a road that curved its spine,
> Superbly sinuous and serpentine,
> Thro' silent symphonies of summer green."

When R. L. S. learned to paddle to the Hawes Inn he claimed "a road without earth's road dust is the right road for me."

He sent his hero forth when he was kidnapped by the seaway that was dear to him. The brig, *The Covenant*, on which poor David was prisoned, rounded Cape Wrath, and Stevenson was happy when it voyaged on the West Coast. Erraid recalled an early excursion with his father, when he first met Edmund Gosse, as well as the cruise on *The Heron*. His *Memories of an Islet* included the recollection how some land-lubber had not noted the ebbing tide left Erraid more a peninsula than an island. Even then he noted how he could use such an incident. He put many such sketches away in the portfolio of his memory, carefully docketed. To turn from *Kidnapped* to the study of facts in "the blessed little volume" which gave Stevenson the foundation of two historic novels, there were many circumstances which led up to Colin Roy's murder. Stewart of Ardshiel's estates were confiscated after the 'Forty-five. At Culloden he had fought for his namesake and gathered over three hundred of his clan from Appin. Colin

HOUSE AT VAILIMA

Campbell of Glenure in 1749 was appointed factor over Ardshiel and other properties, to collect the rents for King George. It was deemed an added insult by the Stewarts to appoint a Campbell to the post. The clansmen of Ardshiel still paid tribute to their exiled chief, and so were behind-hand with rent to King George's agent. Evictions were to take place, and Glenure came with a lawyer and others to execute them, when, as he wound along the hillside among the grey crags and birch woods, a shot rang out, and Colin Roy knew he was wounded to death, and lay down and died. A tree and a cairn mark to-day the spot where he fell. It is difficult to follow the intricacies of this trial, as all concerned were either Campbells or Stewarts, and are distinguished by the names of their farms or properties, or by soubriquets—for instance, the now well-known Alan was "Breck," spotted or pock-marked. Stewart of Ardshiel had an illegitimate brother, known as James of the Glens or by the name of his later farm, Acharn. This James was, from all accounts, a loyal, honourable, and pacific man. He and Colin Roy, the detested factor, were moreover on friendly terms. Perhaps the Stewart thought he could deal the better with the Campbell by having his ear and his confidence. James had a farm on Ardshiel called Glenduror, a well-lying, sheltered spot. The Red Fox, Colin, fancied it; and James, knowing he would gain it in

the end, for peace's sake resigned it. But he loved that far-stretching valley among the hills and felt its loss. He was discreet and held his peace except that occasionally, after a glass too much, his tongue was loosed and he bewailed his fate. He had a son, an Alan also, who, with the rashness of youth, could not endure in silence. He had been heard to threaten, "It will be a dear glen to them"; and that was used as a strong strand in the rope which hung his father. This unfortunate James of the Glens was very observant, for when the murdered man's servant came pounding along at a gallop after his master lay dead on the hillside he said, "Whoever that rider may be, the horse is not his own." When he learned the news he wrung his hands, and, with prophetic second-sight, exclaimed: "Ah! Rob, whoever is the culprit, I shall be the victim."

In *Kidnapped* we see him at Acharn preparing for his house being searched. He was a large-hearted, trusted man, and though he had a family of his own, had taken in three orphans. The farm-house of Acharn still stands, a poor-looking place to modern notions, but a hospitable house in his day, with thick walls and deep-set windows. The roof fell in recently, and one of galvanised iron has replaced the thatch in which the contraband guns and swords were hidden. Among those who sat by the peats which "sent up into the evening air purest of incense" was Alan Breck, son of Donald

Stewart. We read, "The office of tutor and curator was committed to James by Donald, when dying, and though the mother survived and lived in Rannoch, James's duties were by no means light. He gave careful attention to the inheritage of his charges as well as to their education, justifying in all respects the trust of his dead friend." James Stewart was ill-starred. His desirable farm was taken from him, and yet another sting had made him smart: for all his paternal care his ward, Alan Breck, was little credit to him, growing up to become a "wastrel." There was whisky brewed in these hills, and he found companions to drink and gamble, with the result that the carefully hoarded patrimony was dissipated. Appin was a more populous place then than now. Prince Charlie had a regiment of Stewarts recruited from there, fighting for him at Prestonpans. Emigration tempted many away when the sheep, according to the prophecy of the Brahan seer, "laid the plough on the shelf." The crofters were ousted, and in time the fleecy flocks were superseded by the deer. The present-day, money-seeking chiefs have found it has paid to "take for a clan a four-footed people." Alan Breck was surrounded by boon companions, and when his money was spent he went and enlisted under King George—a disgrace in Stewart eyes. He was an easily taken prisoner at Prestonpans and joined the Jacobites, for whom he henceforth fought, serving them in many ways. After

Culloden he proved a daring and useful messenger, and collected rents from the leal crofters for their exiled chief, Stewart of Ardshiel.

Alan Breck had evidently not the fatal gift of beauty. It was the soul within him which made his name travel far in history and romance. He is spoken of in letters from his own countryside as "a desperate foolish fellow," swaggering about in French clothes. We need not grudge Alan this love of finery. He, poor fellow, an outlaw, could seldom strut in his own land in his "braws." When he came over on Jacobite business he had to assume the name of some stodgy Lowlander, and be Mr Thompson or Mr Jamieson. He seldom saw the light of day, or the grey, gleaming sky. Like an owl, he could only come out at night, for he risked his life every time his far-faring feet returned to the country which held his heart. Sir Walter Scott in the notes to *Rob Roy* says, about 1789 a friend of his went to see some procession pass in Paris. His outlook was from the window of a room occupied by a Benedictine priest, a Scotsman. By the fire sat "a tall, thin, raw-boned, grim-looking, old man, with the *petit croix* of St Louis. His eyes were grey. His grizzled hair exhibited marks of having been red, and his complexion was weather-beaten and remarkably freckled." In course of conversation it came out this man, Alan Breck, protested no place in Paris could beat the then principal thoroughfare of Grey

Dunedin, for the old man cried out, "Deil ane of them a' is worth the Hie Street of Edinburgh." Scott tells us this old soldier of fortune lived decently on his little pension. Later inquiries have revealed no trace of our far-famed old fire-eater —in fact, a learned librarian says no mention of him is made in the records of the Scotch regiments serving France at that time, nor in those who held the Order of St Louis. The description of Alan when he was wanted by the authorities after the Appin murder thus runs: "About 5 feet 10 inches high. Visage much pitted with smallpox, a little in-kneed, round-shouldered, and about thirty years. Wearing a blew coat, bretches and vest, a hatt and feather, but his clothes he may have changed." We know from *Kidnapped*, these French clothes were about to be buried with the guns and swords which had been hidden in the thatch; but Alan secured his belongings, and, despite them being weather-stained with his late adventures, donned them with pride.

It was on one of these expeditions home that Stevenson made him meet David Balfour. They were separated by shipwreck, but when pursuing Glenure's murderer, Balfour finds Alan again, fishing-rod in hand. In the evidence it is shown he had been really seen thrashing the river earlier. Who fired that shot, is an unsolved riddle; despite the trial, and books on the subject, no one really knows or has ever revealed it. After many

years, a girl herding cattle behind Ballachulish House found a gun hidden in the hollow of an elder tree. "That is the black gun of misfortune, Janet," said old Mr Stewart of Ballachulish to her. Did Alan Breck put it there, we wonder? Somehow we cannot think he would have let his guardian go to the gibbet if he did. This case shows the tenacity of the Highlanders, and their way of passing down traditions by word of mouth. Many in the Appin district to-day have never seen a printed account of the trial of James of the Glens, but they know of it to minute details. Miss Mary MacKellar, in the *Oban Times*, 1890, writes: "Alan Breac Stewart got the blame of the deed, and certainly he did his best to draw suspicion on himself, and those who knew better were too loyal to speak; and they all knew that James Stewart of Glenduror was innocent, and also if they tried to save him at the expense of him whom they knew to have done the deed, he would be the one to resent it. One can understand a brave man like James Stewart of Glenduror shielding with his life a young enthusiast whose love for his people had blinded him to the consequence of a rash act."

Mr David N. Mackay, editor of *The Trial of James Stewart* in a series of *Notable Scottish Trials*, writes: "As to the identity of the plotters and the murderer, various mutually destructive tales are told. Many persons, who believe them-

My dear Cummy,

I was greatly pleased by your letter in many ways. Of course, I was glad to hear from you; you know, you and I have so many old stories between us, that even if there was nothing else, even if there was not a very sincere respect and affection, we should always be glad to hear a word. I say "even if there was not". But you know right well there is. do not suppose that I shall ever forget those long, bitter nights, when I coughed and coughed and was so unhappy, and you were so patient and loving with a poor, sick child. Indeed, Cummy I wish I might become a man worth talking of: if it were only that you should not have thrown away your pains.

Happily, it is not the result of our acts that makes them brave and noble; but the act themselves and the unselfish love that moved us to do them. "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these" my dear old nurse, and you know there is nothing a man can say or even his heart except his mother or his wife — is my dear old nurse, God will make good to you all the good that you have done, and mercifully forgive you all the evil. Until next time when the Spring comes round, and everything is beginning once again — if you should happen to think that you might have had a child of your own, and that it was hard you should have spent so

many years taking care of some one else's youngest: just you think this — you have been a great deal in my life; you have made much that there is in me, just as surely as if you had conceived me; and there are sons who are more ungrateful to their own mothers than I am to you. For I am not ungrateful, my dear Cummy, and it is with a very sincere emotion that I write myself

Your little boy.

Louis.

selves to be possessed of the secret, are the victims of idle rumour. The real truth is known, I believe, to a few members of the Stewart clan, and to them only; and I should be the last to make public a secret that has been so well kept. Its *antiquity makes it sacred*, and it has been sufficient for me to receive the assurance of those who are well qualified to speak, that James Stewart of Acharn was an innocent man. But why was this secret, now so respectable, preserved at its birth at the cost of a good man's life? Here we have a profoundly interesting problem. When first I considered the situation, I concluded that the tongue-tied country men could have had but one adequate motive—clan loyalty, that some person or persons to whom they owed whole-souled allegiance must have been in the plot."

Ardshiel left a wife and bairns behind him in his castle when he was forced to flee after Culloden; his roof-tree did not long shelter his dear ones. His home was burned a year after the 'Forty-five, and, as in the case of the Bonnie House o' Airlie, it was a brand from this burning dwelling, kept smouldering by his clansmen, that fired the primed gun whose charge found a billet on that mid-May day in the breast of Colin Campbell. His blood dyed the hillside of green Appin a lurid, lasting red. Lady Ardshiel (*née* Haldane) had much to endure for the white cockade. She escaped from the flaming house, and that night, in a poor, black cottage

grimy with peat smoke, her child was born. Campbell vengeance pursued her, and next day she had with her babe to rise and escape through the snow and storm to a safer refuge. James of the Glens was her devoted servant—another reason, as they held at Inveraray, that he should be the guilty man. By some papers extant we hear she was in 1762 in very straitened circumstances. She died, 1782, at Northampton, and her resting grave is in the church of All Saints there.

James Stewart was hanged, 8th November 1752. To-day the scene of execution is pleasing to look on —a tree-covered knoll beside Ballachulish Hotel. His body, guarded by soldiers, was left to rot on the scaffold. To quote again from Mr Mackay: "A very aged residenter in Ballachulish repeated to me the account given him in his early youth by an old Stewart lady of her pious attentions in wiping the dust from his clansman's dead face." When the flesh fell off the bones, the skeleton was bound with wire, and so continued to hang and creak for some years. The gruesome remains of faithful James Stewart, after restless groanings in the winds, were finally stolen by a daft lad; the gallows, flung into the Loch, was carried by the tides to Bonawe, and there stranded. Finally, it was used as timber for a bridge. The bones are said to be buried in Kiel kirkyard in Duror of Appin, where lie kindred ashes of Ardshiel Stewarts. James of the Glens went to this gibbet with a sure and certain hope.

Looking his judges in the face, he told them he did not fear death; he took the Sacrament on the morning of his execution and again protested his innocence, comforting himself by repeating verses of the thirty-fifth psalm, known in the district, even now, as "James of the Glens' psalm."

In *Kidnapped* we leave this kindly natured, doubtless unjustly doomed man in his homestead, knowing his arrest was imminent. His heart, when David saw him, was sore for his wife, who he felt certain would soon be widowed. In *Kidnapped* Alan and David set forth from Acharn, and "birsle" on a sun-smitten rock in Glencoe in the heat of a summer day, within sight and sound of water—unable to reach it for the watching soldiers. As they crept south they visited Cluny Macpherson in his cave, and Alan had a piping contest at Balquhidder with a son of Rob Roy. All these people are founded on the originals, and the situations but slightly altered. Stevenson pays a nice compliment to Cummy as they near their hard journey's end. Limekilns is not far from Torryburn, Alison Cunningham's birthplace, and the lass who ferries them over is an Alison—maybe a forebear of the Cunninghams. He wished his distant relatives, the younger Balfours of Shaws, "as kind a nurse" as he had, and eventually sent this Alison to tend them. In the dedication to *Kidnapped*, the author explains that "honest Alan" in his pages has no desperate venture on hand, no other purpose "than

to steal some young gentleman's attention from his Ovid, carry him awhile into the Highlands of the last century, and pack him to bed with some engaging images to mingle with his dreams." He succeeded, for as *Punch* sings in a review :

> "A graphic story here you'll find by R. L. Stevenson.
> It beats the *Treasure Island* or any he has done.
> From opening until finish your attention's kept alive.
> The scene is laid in Scotland just after 'Forty-five."

From first to last it is an enthralling tale, and what adds to the interest is the fact that it is firmly founded on truth; the main incidents, the principal characters, are historic. This chronicle, so full of originals, Stevenson resumed some years after he had left Scotland. He kept this word, for he promised a sequel in the last paragraph of *Kidnapped*. In the preface to the continuation of *David Balfour*, which, as in *Kidnapped*, is addressed to Charles Baxter, he wonders if there is left in Edinburgh "some long-legged, hot-headed youth who will relish the pleasure, which should have been ours, to follow among named streets and numbered houses the country walks of David Balfour, to identify Dean and Silvermills and Broughton, and Hope Park, and Pilrig, and poor old Lochend (if it still be standing), and the Figgate Whins (if there be any of them left), or to push on (on a long holiday) so far afield as Gillane and the Bass." It has come to pass many make pilgrimages to see these places, just for R. L. S.'s sake, though *Catriona* is not so

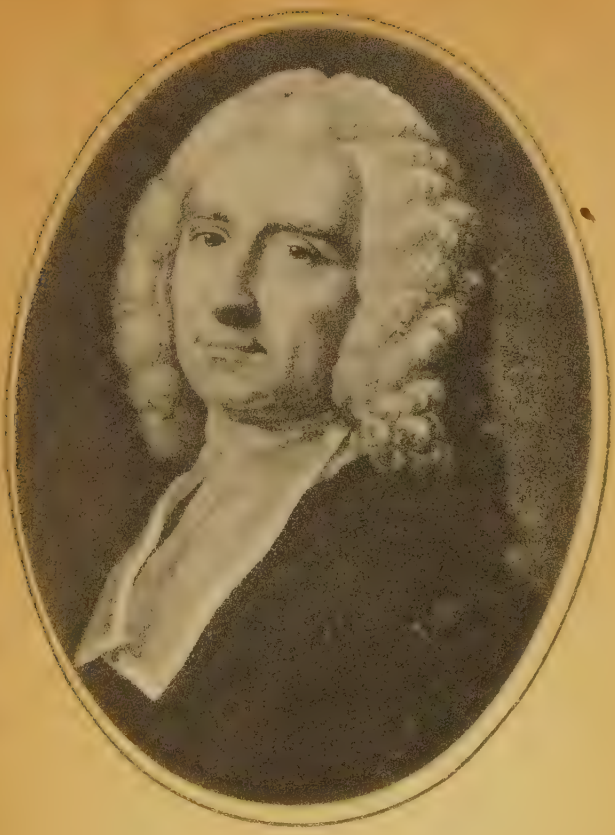
popular, wanting the action and excitements of *Kidnapped*. Its plot is confined at first within the walls of the Old Town. Dogged David is but solemn company, but he takes interesting walks beyond the city bounds and describes them well. On his way to Pilrig House, he passes the Picardy weavers' colony, where the Huguenot refugees are busy plying their shuttles. He wanders by the Lang Gait, now Princes Street, muses by the solitude of the Nor' Loch when depressed, where he decides to confide in Catriona, who is living in a house, now swept away, on the banks of the Water of Leith above the village of Dean. He has to ask his way of the miller, and one, powdery with dust, was there in R. L. S.'s day, for the Dean keeps some of its old characteristics. But when we go with David to hunt for Alan, it is difficult for us to reconstruct the country by Silvermills as it was 180 years ago. David went close by the scrog of wood, to the east of Silvermills, and south by the mill-lade. When R. L. S. was a schoolboy at the Academy, the mill-lade was there, bordered by tall hemlocks. All is built over—the water drained away; but he pictures it for us very clearly as it was in 1752. The two seemingly ill-assorted comrades, Highlander and Lowlander, who, in *Kidnapped*, went through so many vicissitudes together, again set forth to evade the law. This time they start for North Berwick through the fat Lothians, a strip of country the author knew right

well. He spent many summers on this coast; and the scene of a brief tale which shows alike the strength of his pen and his imagination, *The Pavilion on the Links*, is supposed to be laid at Gullane. Stevenson was master of English, but he proves to us he was also master of his native tongue. The tale Davie hears from Andie, when he is a prisoner on the Bass, is, as he himself says, a piece of "living Scots. If I had never written anything but that and *Thrawn Janet*, still I'd have been a writer." They show his weird power in depicting the supernatural. Poor David in *Catriona* had to deal with hard facts. The Campbells had determined to have a Stewart life for a Campbell's. The result of James of the Glens' trial, held by the latter's diplomacy at Inveraray, was a foregone conclusion. With eleven Campbell jurymen and the four others under the Duke's dominion, no evidence could have saved him. David had a rough time, trying with his matter-of-fact downrightness to bear witness as to what he had seen, but the men of the law on the other side were as determined not to allow him to appear. These men, whom he met and talked with in Edinburgh, are all originals. The Lord Advocate shortly after this trial was raised to the Bench as Lord Prestongrange. The lawyer David employed to help James of the Glens a Stewart of Edinglassie, was a kinsman of the prisoner. Thomas Miller, the counsel for the defence, was an Ayrshire man, and Burns mentions

him in *The Vision*, when years had gone by, as "An aged judge—I saw him rove dispensing good."

One man David had reason to mistrust and hate was Simon Fraser. His chronicler gives Balfour's opinion of this Master of Lovat, which raised a chorus of protestations, on the publication of *Catriona*, from the Highlands. At a meeting of the Gaelic Society, at Inverness, 1894, Mr Fraser Mackintosh voiced the matter and resented R. L. Stevenson's character sketch of the chief of Clan Fraser. Mrs Grant of Laggan's statement that this Master of Lovat "differed from his father only as a chained-up fox does from one at liberty" bears out the Balfour-Stevenson conception. Owing to Simon Fraser supporting the Jacobite cause, he was arrested on a charge of high treason and remained in Edinburgh Castle a prisoner till 1747. He became an advocate, and, as we know, practised; but David Balfour, when he followed in his footsteps, would not meet his crafty enemy among other members of the Bar. The fighting blood was strong in Simon Fraser, and he cast off wig and gown and donned the red coat of a soldier, and fought the tough fights under Wolfe at Quebec. The Lovat estates were restored to him, when, after seeing service in Canada, he sheathed his sword and became a distinguished member of Parliament. He must have been a clever man to play well so many parts. The Appin murder trial brings to light the best and worst of Highland character.

The tongue-tied loyalty, which cost James of the Glens his life, shows the strong feeling of a tribesman to his clan and chief. It reveals the inherited hatred of the Stewart against the Campbells and *vice versa*, typical of the feuds which separated neighbours. Then there is the other side of the picture. The man who became David Balfour's father-in-law was truly, as Andrew Lang says, "a valiant, plausible, conscienceless, heartless liar." When, as a prisoner in the Tolbooth, he thought it would be to his betterment to curry favour with those in power, he swore that James of the Glens had tried to persuade him to murder the factor, Colin Roy. Later, false and grasping, he tried to entrap Alan Breck at Dunkirk. Honest Alan, with his fiery blood, naturally bore him a grudge, and vowed a vengeance that he never had an opportunity to fulfil. This James Mohr Drummond Macgregor, a son of the famous Rob Roy, died as he deserved to die, in poverty abroad, 1754. The Lord Advocate figures much in *Catriona*—a true and a pleasant representation of William Grant of Prestongrange. "There was in him a rectitude of moral feeling and a principle of virtuous integrity which regulated the whole of his conduct," says Tytler. He had the difficult task of adjusting the claims on the forfeited estates after the 'Forty-five, and executed it justly and creditably. Dr Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk mentions him in his memoirs: "Lord Preston-



WILLIAM GRANT, LORD PRESTONGRANGE

grange, the patron of the parish, who was my father's friend and old companion at college, was generous to my mother by giving her a grant of the glebe which was partly sown, and a considerable part of the vacant stipend to which she was not entitled." Dr Carlyle, in the same page, speaks of some girls, the pretty daughters of a friend, and describes them. We wish he had described the Misses Grant. Certainly, the eldest was a bright and lively lass, and we do not wonder Stevenson preferred her to the daughter of the treacherous James Mohr, who, though pretty, was a trifle dull, like David. A writer in the *Westminster Budget* says that: "Stevenson had a sort of coyness and archness which reminds me of nothing so much as Miss Grant in his own *Catriona*. Indeed, I seem to see more of the real Stevenson in that lady than in any male character in his books. His has just that quality of wit, that fine manner and great gentleness under a surface of polished raillery." When he was sitting to Count Nerli for his portrait at Vailima, to wile away the time he made doggerel lines to rhyme with the artist's name, and in one couplet desired to be painted "bonnie as a girlie." He had no idea the quizzical flirt, Miss Grant, whom he fathered on the Lord Advocate Prestongrange, was to be compared to himself. He often confesses to egotism, and he exclaims, speaking of the characters in the sequel to *Kidnapped*, "But, O dear me! I came near los-

ing my heart to Barbara." He evidently liked this reflection of himself.

Many a Scot, Highland or Lowland, has had to cross the seas, and Stevenson transported a rueful family to Canada. Among the moor and mountains the year he was at Pitlochry a vision of this household of Durrisdeer came to him. Some recollection of his walk through Carrick and Galloway touched a chord in his memory—some castle by the southland sea came flashing back. It was a hag-ridden four he placed there with the trusty steward MacKellar to help the Master's unfortunate brother, and Alison Graeme. Stevenson left them to grow up by the Solway tide, till one evening, when he was at Saranac, his Brownies as usual revealed to him he might bring them over seas and use with full force an incident he had heard of in his childhood. He tells how this idea came to him in the verandah—"a wonderful clear night of stars," doubtless "clear and cold and sweet with the purity of the forests." He vowed to weave a romance "of many years, and countries of the sea, and the land savagery and civilisation." "There cropped up," he continued, "in my memory a singular case of a buried and resuscitated fakir which I had often been told by an uncle of mine." It was this Balfour uncle, he mentions in *Random Memories*, who was still walking his hospital rounds while the troopers from Meerut clattered and cried, "Deen, Deen!" along

the streets of the Imperial City.

"The idea of the final restoration from the pit of death" came vividly before him in the frosty air, and he there resolved to create the malign Master of Ballantrae, naming this baleful hero after a peaceful, sunny village on the Ayrshire coast. Stevenson was wrong in making this beguiling, evil man, who gloried in torturing father, brother, and the girl who loved him, "Master" of a place whose title his father did not bear—he should have been Master of Durrisdeer. We catch a glimpse, like a bright flash for a moment in this tale, of Alan Breck. It was before the Appin murder, according to a note by MacKellar in the Chevalier de Burke's *Memoirs*. Alan, with his sword which made meat for eagles, would have done well to run the oily-tongued villain through. He challenged the Master, but that coward clapped spurs to his good horse and fled. Nimble as a goat, Alan pursued him, but in vain. It is a pity he had not been overtaken and tasted of Alan's true steel and saved his brother from a life of "unmerited distress" till he slept in a grave by his "fraternal enemy." *The Master of Ballantrae* is ill to read. Stevenson liked horrors "gripping you by the throat," he called it. This fancy was part of the eternal child in him. Ruskin tells how a lady and her sweet-looking children visited him, and he showed her a newly acquired picture. It was of a disaster at sea. One little person climbed

on a chair and inspected the havoc wrought by the storm. She called to her sister cherubs to come up and see, for she had found among the waves some men clinging to wreckage, and they all gloated over the imminent death of the sailors. Ruskin recoiled in horror. "Are all children like that?" he asked. Scott had that same appetite in full, for he confesses, "My own enthusiasm was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and terrible, *the common taste of children*, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day." The original of the Master of Ballantrae is to be found in a condensed essence of badness, the bitter drop of blood which breaks out in families ever and anon. The murder on the shores of Loch Linnhe in *Kidnapped*, the story of our guerilla warfare obliterating the Red Indians in North America which Stevenson in Saranac would study anew, suggested to him the plot for a poem, a romance of destiny. He has one original in *The Master of Ballantrae*, Sir William Johnson, who understood the ways of our enemies, "the painted faces," and directed our affairs in the backwoods, "Where, girt and crowned by sword and fire, England, with bare and bloody feet, climbed the steep road of wide Empire." Thinking of Sir William and his work among the redskins sent Stevenson's mind back to a tradition which connected Loch Linnhe with our fight to protect our colonies on the way north to Canada. He told this story in song in an Ameri-

can magazine in 1891. "I first heard this legend of my own country," he states, "from that friend of men of letters, Mr Alfred Nutt, 'there in roaring London's central stream'; and since the ballad first saw the light of day in *Scribner's Magazine* Mr Nutt and Lord Archibald Campbell have been in public controversy on the facts. Two clans, the Camerons and the Campbells, lay claim to this bracing story; and they do well: the man who preferred his plighted troth to the commands and menaces of the dead is an ancestor worth disputing. But the Campbells must rest content: they have the broad lands and the broad page of history; this appanage must be denied to them; for between the name of Cameron and the name of Campbell the muse will never hesitate." This poem is entitled *Ticonderoga: a Legend of the West Highlands*, 1777. The facts are: an Appin Stewart in a dispute killed his friend—a Cameron. He knew the ferries and the fords would be guarded, but he knew that Alan Breck had slipped south a quarter of a century before him through watchful soldiers. He had in him the cunning as well as the boldness of the Highlander. He ran swift, as if he bore the Fiery Cross, to Inverawe, to the house of the dead man's brother, and told his host he had slain a man in an encounter and was doomed to die unless secreted. He put his soul in his hands, and Inverawe swore to do his best to preserve him. As the live Cameron lay in a great four-post bed

in his castle, a wraith—the wraith of his newly dead brother—came to him, and demanded that he should give up his murderer, but he thrice refused to break his plighted troth. Then the ghost threatened him as daylight came and he would have to take his leave. The name, "Ticonderoga," he said, would haunt the man who sheltered his brother's murderer till the time of his own death was imminent. This Cameron who held his word to be a sacred bond served King George abroad, and all the while the one strange name hummed in his ears, disturbing him even as he slept. He went with his regiment to America. He was a skilful captain, and planned a fight by a ford beyond Albany, where the Master of Ballantrae lies. He asked the friendly Indian guide the name of the place, and was told the French had called it Sault Marie, "but it had been Ticonderoga in the days of the great dead." Then Inverawe knew his hour had come—that those of the "painted faces" lay in ambush, and he, fighting, fell.

"And far from the hills of heather,
Far from the isles of sea,
He sleeps in the place of the name,
As it was doomed to be."

The poem tells this tale in a fine swing. The descendants of Inverawe can testify to its truth. The wife of the man who interviewed his brother's wraith told them she heard or saw naught of the ghostly visitant, but at dawn of day she heard from her husband's lips the dread word "Ticonderoga."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH
SOUTH SEAS AND THE MAGNETIC NORTH

"Taking tired people to the Islands of the Blest."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

STEVENSON ENJOYED THE COMradeship of collaboration. He was a man seemingly designed to be a choice literary partner, for, besides his proven skill in weaving words, he was industrious and adaptable. He always enjoyed fellowship with those with whom he could discuss his work. He mapped out the plan of a coming novel whenever he resolved starting on one. This was putting up the scaffolding, he said; and as soon as the foundation was laid and the walls begun, he called attention to the rising structure, and read aloud the opening chapters of his new romance to those around. He had no shyness in regard to the children of his brain; he introduced them at once to an audience and watched to see what impression they created. All these traits point to his being an ideal collaborator, but none of his books composed with a colleague were up to his usual standard. His plays when staged, we know, failed. *The Dynamiter* and *The New Arabian Nights* were written with his wife. He extolled her as an able critic, "chary of praise and prodigal of counsel." Mr Thomas Stevenson advised his son never to publish anything which did not meet with her approval. *The Wrong Box* he wrote in partnership with "an American gentleman," as he called his stepson, Samuel Lloyd Osbourne, in a dedication. The principal part, the origin of this farce, belonged to the younger man, who had planned and transcribed it first alone. Tontines had long tickled Ste-

venson's fancy, and a dead body to be disposed of had its fascinations as well as sailors' yarns anent

> ". . . schooners, islands and maroons,
> And buccaneers and buried gold."

In a short Edinburgh story Stevenson wrote, *The Adventures of John Nicholson*, he left a corpse in a friend's house at Murrayfield, a suburb close by his native town. He had spent Saturday holidays there, at his school-fellow Mr Baildon's home. Years after his friend, opening up correspondence with him, reminded him of the unburied body he had placed in their dining-room without leave, and suggested he should return from Samoa if only to remove it and apologise in person. How an unfortunate man killed in a railway accident and mistaken for the Tontine uncle is started off on his bewildering travels, first in a barrel whose label is changed by a practical joker in the van, and later in a piano which is sent on as a present to a musician—is told in *The Wrong Box*. It struck many when it came out that Michael Finsbury, when he, in a holiday mood, undertook the disposal of the misdirected body, with his sublime assurance and bluff, reminded them of Charles Baxter, who was joked on the subject and did not deny the resemblance.

Stevenson was unaware of this surmise, and wrote Mr Baxter: "I have finished a story, *The Wrong Box*. If it is not funny, I am sure I don't know what is. I have split over writing it." Andrew

Lang found it vastly amusing, too; but the general public have not taken to it with avidity. It was at Saranac Lloyd Osbourne first wrote his conception of this tale as *The Finsbury Tontine*, and, some time after the cruise in the *Casco* had begun, Stevenson joined with his stepson, and they rewrote it. "Louis had to follow the text very closely, being unable to break away without jeopardising the succeeding chapters," the first author informs us. There was, from a copyright point of view, advantage in being a partner of Lloyd Osbourne, he being an American citizen. Stevenson had enjoyed the elaborating of the freaks of *The Wrong Box* as a piece of play work, when busy on the ghastly delineation of *The Master of Ballantrae*, so they decided to collaborate in further work. Stevenson, even in his young, impetuous days, was always interested in other people's ideas, and a young author appealed to his chivalry and his sympathy. He wanted to help the weaker brother, as behoved a knight-errant. Though so brilliant a talker, and liking to shine in conversation, he was also a wonderfully patient listener. He might be getting copy out of the wrongs, grievances, or difficulties confided to him, but he hearkened with an attentive ear and closed lips. He was rejoiced to have a clever apprentice at his right hand, and set to work to teach him his craft. "When an idea for a book was started," says Mr Osbourne, "we used to talk it over together, and generally carried

the tale on from one invention to another until, in accordance with Louis's own practice, we had drawn out a complete list of the chapters." The smart young disciple had theories of his own. He wrote the first three chapters of *The Ebb Tide*, and was well contented with the praise bestowed upon it. The Paris parts of *The Wrecker* and the end of *The Ebb Tide*, Lloyd Osbourne says he never touched: but he explains, "I was the practical man, so to speak, the one who paced the distances and used the weights and measures; the picnics in San Francisco, and the commercial details of Loudon's partnership. Nares was mine and Pinkerton to a great degree, and Captain Brown was mine throughout."

The Wrong Box never was a popular favourite, or profitable, but *The Wrecker*, we are told, rivalled the income brought in by David Balfour's histories, "and still continues to earn £200 a year with unvarying regularity." The genesis of *The Wrecker*, Stevenson mentions, "was started within sight of the Johnson Islands," on a moonlight night when it was a joy to be alive. The authors were amused with several stories of the sale of wrecks. The subject tempted them, and they sat apart in the alley-way to discuss its possibilities. While being compiled, the manuscript of *The Wrecker* journeyed much by sea. It sailed in the *Janet Nicoll*, and on board was nearly burned, but after varied experiences finally appeared serially in

Scribner. The principal partner had long yarns with a man who was wrecked four times, and consulted with him over the wild trip to the Island. "He told me he was working a storm scene into a story, and later on he would ask me to look it over carefully," he affirms.

Stevenson was in high glee, we know, when he received £100 for *Treasure Island*. He felt it hard, he said, to be a grown man and not able to buy bread. That was at La Solitude and Hyères, where he was once happy. He makes a moan at times in his letters over money matters. Pounds, shillings, and pence worried him even when he was well, and when ill we see in his letters they bulk largely. "Why will people spring bills on you?" he asks at Hyères. "But I've paid my rent until September, and beyond the chemist, the grocer, the baker, the doctor, the gardener, Lloyd's teacher, and the great chief creditor, Death, I can snap my fingers at all men." But he was never for long uneasy as to money, for he humorously admits when speaking of his financial difficulties, "I always fall on my feet, but I am constrained to add that the best part of my legs are my father's."

He judged collaboration would pay, and Lloyd Osbourne did his full share of work, as was fitting; but the latter states, "The partnership was a mistake for me, nearly as much as for him; but I don't believe Louis ever enjoyed any work more." In *Forest Notes* Stevenson recalls the sunny days he

spent at Fontainebleau. *Providence and the Guitar* is founded on a reminiscence and experience at Grez. Some strolling players came, and were put up in back premises at Chevillon's Inn. Stevenson sought their company, and spent his time with them, as in the days when as "Velvet Coat" he frequented Edinburgh taverns, and where, he tells us, "I was the companion of seamen, chimney-sweeps, and thieves; my circle was continually being changed by the action of the police magistrate." As he smoked and talked with these mummers he learned from them the privations of their life, and how their only child, boarded out, had fallen and was deformed in consequence.

At Vailima, talking over the tale which he had made out of this sad incident, his stepdaughter said to him she thought *Providence and the Guitar* a very pretty story full of sweetness and the milk of human kindness. He answered, "What I want to give, and what I try for, is to preach God's moral," and he argued he could preach and use his talents better when he depicted the grim or terrible and when he awakened the echoes of primeval fear. Except for this brief story of the tramp play-actors, his artist life in Paris he seemed to have folded away after he wrote *Forest Notes*; but in *The Wrecker* they come out fresh and unforgotten. There were all sorts and conditions among the painters his cousin R. A. M. Stevenson introduced him to. They do not change much in spirit

and hope. We have them brought before us in *Trilby* and other books. Stevenson, in a letter to his mother, tells of some of their inexpensive Bohemian revelries, and asks for £10 for his expenses, and to buy some book treasures which he is seeking. Stevenson picked out W. H. Low as his special comrade in the hive of art where he pretended to be a drone; and he, in turn, in his book, *A Chronicle of Friendships*, tells of his intimacy with R. L. S., and mentions many names of the "Club," as the residents at the Inn at Barbizon really were. O'Meara, a descendant of Napoleon's doctor and biographer at St Helena, is well to the fore in a photograph taken at the river end of the garden at Chevillon's Inn, Grez, and printed in Mr Low's book. He is very smart and trig ("young Donnybrook" R. L. S. calls him, describing a fancy-dress dance in Paris), standing next R. A. M. Stevenson. Anthony Henley, a brother of W. E. Henley, is near, and Mons. Palizzi, their teacher and master, is speaking to a pupil about his last picture. The big, yellow-bearded Enfield is not in this photograph. R. L. S. used his name, making him the distant relative and good-looking friend of Mr Utterson in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Among this band of painters there arrived a man from across the Atlantic, who did not seem to have the artistic faculty much in evidence. He interested the others, inquiring for very practical information as to the cost of every-

thing, and of the rewards for their labours. Most of the artists had, with opposition, followed their bent in adopting their profession, lured on by the Siren Art, who had compelled them to take up the brush; but the new arrival puzzled them till he informed them there were statues wanted for some town in America from whence he came, and his "Poppa" had sent him forth to "learn to sculp," as he thought he could get the order for his son. The quiet matter-of-factness of the man's statement had taken the others' breath away at first, but the simple effrontery of it amused them. He set to work to acquire a knowledge of how to "make busts" in the same manner he would have desired to be taught book-keeping. He (Pardesous was his name) is, of course, Loudon Dodd's original in *The Wrecker*. Stevenson, who thought out his plans and plots so well, decided this fact, baldly stated, was too audacious for fiction, and made the hero in his *Wrecker* dislike business finance in his youth, and fancy architecture. He also cunningly claims Loudon as a countryman on the spindle side, and his grandfather, old Alexander Loudon, an Edinburgh man, is a retired stonemason. Loudon visits his mother's people, and wanders about with old "Ecky." This name shows what a wonderful memory R. L. S. had in these matters. Eck, in out-of-the-world Lowland country places, is used oftener for a contraction of Alexander than the typical Scots Sandy. Stevenson

also retained in his memory how down by Silvermills were some stonecutters' yards where tombstones stood to tempt the passing mourner. He had watched a man engraving a name, and adding some winged cherub to adorn the plain slab. The grandfather had not been a brilliant builder, from Loudon's account; but it is a clever touch, making the old Scotsman handle a chisel to account for the thin vein of art in the coming student of the Latin Quarter.

R. L. Stevenson stayed on with his cousin in Paris when his other friends left the Forest in autumn, and had in the treasure-house of his memory stored all the queer scenes and makeshifts to obtain food or money, the irresponsible gaiety which he learned while living as one among artists. When Loudon's father is dead, leaving no fortune, the son is in sore straits for cash, and in *The Wrecker* tells of his difficulties: "Many of my friends were gone; others themselves in a precarious situation. Romney (for instance) was reduced to tramping Paris in a pair of country sabots, his only suit of clothes so imperfect (in spite of cunningly adjusted pins) that the authorities at the Luxembourg suggested his withdrawal from the gallery." Romney was real, and, like Loudon and Low, was an American. He was in advance in years of the other students. They were all speaking of their prospects at Siron's, of the value of their summer's work. He was very quiet,

listening to those with the thatch of hair on their young heads much in evidence. His study on his easel was not likely to bring him money. All he said when they came to criticise it and ask its market value was, "I am poor, and I am old"; and, letting his head fall forward, added more sadly, "I am bald." They were kind with their "loans" to one another, and the original of destitute Romney touched some hearts there, who had money in their pockets, which they gave to allow him to be admitted again to the Luxembourg Galleries. Old Mr Dodd confides in his son when he tells him the reason why he is sent to study sculpture. On Loudon assuring him he never dreamed of being a sculptor, "Well, here it is," he says. "I took up the statuary contract on our new capitol; I took it up as a deal; and then it occurred to me it would be better to keep it in the family. It meets your idea; there's considerable money in the thing; and it's to decorate the capitol of your native State. But the sooner you go, and the harder you work, the better; for if the first half-dozen statues aren't in a line with public taste in Muskegon, there will be trouble." The original of Loudon certainly existed, but what line of business he eventually took to, we do not know.

When Loudon returns to his old artist's haunts after his strange pursuit of wealth, no longer a would-be sculptor, Madame Siron of the Forest Inn welcomes him. He finds only R. A. M. Ste-

venson there. In the book he is called Stennis, for that was the abbreviation of the surname of the grandsons of the engineer at Barbizon. R. L. "Stennis" had gone abroad to his southern Ultima Thule when Loudon had finished his deal in wrecks. Loudon goes back to Barbizon to look for Carthew as Madden, and "Bob" Stennis's conversation on greeting him bears out his cousin's praise of his ready tongue. R. L. S. was always fonder of Barbizon than of Grez, to which so many flitted for aquatic reasons. Yet, at the end of the *Inland Voyage*, he says: "You may paddle all day long; but it is when you come back at nightfall and look in at the familiar room that you will find Love or Death awaiting you beside the stove; and the most beautiful adventures are not those you go to seek." There, when he left the *Arethusa*, he met Mrs Osbourne, which is, as he says in *The Wrecker*, "an excellent example of the Blind Man's Buff that we call life."

In an epistolary epilogue of this story of Loudon Dodd he addressed to Mr Low, Stevenson confesses: "For sure, if any person can here appreciate and read between the lines, it must be you. All the dominoes will be transparent to your better knowledge; the statuary contract will be to you a piece of ancient history; and you will not have now heard for the first time of the dangers of the wine of Roussellon. Dead leaves from the Bas Breau echo from Lavencie's and the Rue Ra-

cine's memories of a common past. Let these be your book-markers as you read. And if you be pleased with naught else in the story, be a little pleased to breathe once more for a moment the airs of our youth."

There is another original in *The Wrecker*. Mr John Buckland, known in Samoa by his nickname as "Tin Jack," is the prototype of Tommy Haddon. He was staying at Vailima with Captain Wurmbrandt, an Austrian, in 1894, and the Englishman regaled the circle there with tales "of love and the Islands," and the cavalry officer of camps and bivouacs and wars. Answering a letter to an officer on *H.M.S. Curaçoa*, Stevenson expresses pleasure his correspondent, Lieutenant Eeles, had met Mr Buckland. "We not only know him, but (as the French say) we don't know anybody else; he is our intimate and adored original, and—prepare your mind—he was and is and ever will be Tommy Haddon. You are quite right. Tommy is really 'a good chap,' though about as comic as they make them."

Mr Buckland had first met Stevenson when they were all fellow-passengers in 1890, on board the *Janet Nicoll*, a very rolling screw-steamer in which R. L. S. and his family took passage from Sydney. The author was drawn to "Tin Jack," who reciprocated the liking; but it was Mr Stevenson, the hospitable, gracious host, all beaming with smiles, Tommy Haddon appreciated, not the court-

ed man of letters. Stevenson gave him a book, and put an inscription in it to enhance it. Another guest, who had come from Apia, envied him the possession of this volume. The latter was a literary admirer of R.L.S. He deemed the author had cast pearls, etc. Buckland was no reader. The thief-to-be judged rightly that he would only lose it or throw it away, so he conspired that a third party should invite Mr Buckland down to the bar of the hotel at Apia, where they were staying, and while there the Stevensonian worshipper pocketed the book. We trust "Tin Jack" had a deep thirst on him, and so the thief could salve his conscience: in the author's words, he could "liquidate the debt." The man who never missed the inscribed volume came to a tragic end—blown to pieces by an explosion on Suwareow Island. Stevenson dedicated *Island Nights' Entertainments* to three of his South Sea friends: Buckland, Ben Hird, and Henderson. Hird was supercargo on the same steamer whereon Buckland met R. L. S. He is also dead, and lies in a lonely grave on the Island of Funafuti. Mr Henderson is the only survivor of the three who, in the expressive Samoan tongue, were "good brown earth," meaning, useful, unpretending men.

The Wrecker was a financial success, but Stevenson felt neither it nor his other collaborated stories were up to his high-water mark. He was, by the time he sent *The Wrecker* forth, a well-

known man, and his fame and his receipts from his work increasing yearly.

The Ebb Tide, as he describes it in his letters, is "a dreadful grimy business in the third person. My dear man, the grimness of that story is not to be depicted in words."

Stevenson was weary of writing of the derelicts on the shores of the islands of his choice. He had been a very fortunate man, having his dream come true of sailing away into the sunset with all he held dear. It obliterated from his mind what he had suffered in San Francisco, where for once he was stranded penniless on a lee-shore, in a strange land. As a Silverado squatter, he had healed that wound. In it he pays a pretty compliment to his own city, which had branded him for her own wherever he might wander.

Tennyson, like R. L. S., had a love for sea travel. "To own a ship, a large steam yacht, and go round the world, that's my notion of glory," said the Poet Laureate. Even if funds had allowed, Stevenson would have preferred the older-fashioned sails to steam. His mother, speaking of this cruise of the *Casco* when it was planned, says: "It seems almost too good to be true, and for Louis' sake I can't but be glad, for his heart has been so long set upon it, it must surely be good for his health to have such a desire granted." So he sailed forth on his own ship, and the natives of the islands, as well as their climate, were all his fancy pictur-

ed. "I love the Polynesian," he writes; "this civilisation of ours is a dingy, ungentlemanly business; it drops out too much of man, and too much of that, the very beauty of the poor beast, who has his beauties beside Zola & Co."

He addressed a poem to the Princess Kaiulani, who was being sent home.

"Forth from her land to mine she goes,"

he says, and, in a note to the verses, adds: "When she comes to my land, and her father's, and the rain beats upon the window (as I fear it will), let her look at this page; it will be like a weed gathered and pressed at home, and she will remember her own islands, and the shadow of the mighty tree." He felt in sympathy with his native neighbours. He never wrote of them in a romance, but composed with care *A Footnote to History* in regard to their troubles. He fought for the Samoans with his pen, as he could not wield a sword on their behalf. He understood them, for he found, he said, they had many of the codes of honour, the inborn courtesy of manners of the Highlander of bygone times, and he formed his household into a species of home clan of which he was the chief. He wrote out prayers for family worship at Vailima, at which they all assembled. The origin of this custom was a recollection from his old Edinburgh home, and when his mother came to Vailima, he held them to please her. Recently, a friend*

* The Rev. Mr Bisset, minister of Ratho.

who knew him in the days he was a pattern idler, writing in *Life and Work*, says Stevenson had a notebook which he called his "Book of Original Nonsense." R. L. S. went to hear this companion preach in Old Greyfriars when he was first licensed. During the sermon the young minister observed R. L. S. busily writing. He asked him after if it was original nonsense he was noting down. "No," he said; "I was copying some beautiful sentences from an evening prayer in a volume of Family Prayers that I found in the pew"; and he read from his notebook the following words: "O God, who hast appointed the night for rest and the day for the works and labours of life, we beseech Thee to grant us quiet repose this night, that our bodies being refreshed, our minds may be more wakeful and strong to serve Thee. Let not our sleep or any bodily indulgence degenerate into intemperance and sloth," etc. It is a long, well-worded prayer, a groundwork of those he used at Vailima with a dash of the faith of R. L. S. added. The young minister, when he read the words, said, "I believe you have the religious bump after all." "Possibly," he replied, "but only in the earliest embryonic stage"; but with Thackeray he could testify:

> "If in the time of sacred youth
> We learned at home to love and pray,
> Pray Heaven that early love and truth
> May never wholly pass away."

The Vailima family worship was a pose, but one

which gave great satisfaction to his good mother.

When he threw off the fetters of collaboration, he turned his thoughts again to the North, and began *St Ives* and his own family history of the Stevensons, but both of these he regarded as in a manner holiday tasks. He had many checks when rearing the foundation of Anne St Ives' career. He dressed him wrong, to begin with, and found from books which arrived later he had made serious slips as to the treatment of French prisoners, so he started anew, and then he had to cease dictating, because of threatened hæmorrhage. He took this reverse with blithe resignation. "Allow me to introduce you to Mr Dumbley," he wrote on a slate when his amanuensis appeared. Mrs Strong, to amuse him (he described himself as a rose-garden invalid wreathed in weak smiles), showed him the deaf-and-dumb alphabet on the fingers, and he seized on the idea to continue *Anne St Ives* by these signs. Slow work it must have been, but thus pages were dictated, and remain a monument of his courage and perseverance. We meet St Ives first in the castle which overlooks R. L. S.'s precipitous city, "the high and nobil town" of the poet Dunbar. There are but few originals of people in this novel, but many of places. He has focussed the life of the French prisoners there for us, and pictured their wide outlook from the grey fortress to the hills and sea. The heroine, Flora, bears a Scottish historic name, and, like

Prince Charlie's Flora, is a comely, sensible lass. Stevenson had an inspiration to make her inhabit his old home, Swanston. He recalled how its position could be spied from the castle walls. His path was not to be again across the deep. So he felt it refreshing to visit familiar scenes even in imagination. How Swanston came to be built by the Bailies and Town Council, on a water-finding quest, is told in his *Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh.* They purchased a field for sake of the springs; then it occurred to them that with the public money they might have a pleasure-house built, and go thither and junket. The dell was turned into a garden, and on the knoll that shelters it from the plain and the sea winds they reared a cottage looking to the Pentlands. They helped themselves freely to gargoyles and crockets from old St Giles, and planted clematis over the quarry from which the stone for Swanston Cottage had been hewed. They planted trees and shrubs, including hollies; so Ronald Gilchrist cut "as good a cudgel as a man may wish for in a row" from one. This stick he gave to St Ives, who used it with full effect on the sleek-haired, hard head of a gipsy king. In the newly planted garden when the trees were but shrubs, "purple magistrates relaxed themselves from the pursuit of municipal ambition, . . . and at night, from high up on the hills, a shepherd saw lighted windows through the foliage, and heard the voice of city dignitaries raised in song."

St Ives' escapes and dangers were in reality composed and dictated amid warful sounds. "Yesterday," says Mrs Strong, in March 1894, "we wrote steadily at 'Anne,' while war news and rumours flew around. But nothing stops the cheerful flow of 'Anne'"; again in August she says: "We have worked at 'Anne' all these mornings when the guns were firing on Atua, stopping once in a while to speculate on what damage they might be doing. In the meantime we plod along at 'Anne,' while groups of natives stand silently and anxiously on the verandah, listening to the booming guns." Stevenson writes, in his *Vailima Letters*, of his new romance: "If it has a merit to it, I should say it was a sort of deliberation and swing to the style which seems to me to suit the mail-coaches and post-chaises with which it sounds all through." Yet the modern weapons of war were booming while St Ives was travelling along that old great North Road with bygone slowness. A traveller to Scotland by that route towards the end of the eighteenth century, leisurely posting up to Edinburgh, found the long-headed people of the North of England, impatient at hilly, rough highways and anxious to travel quicker than by wheels and horses, much taken up with the idea of flying machines. They were not worked by engines. The era of steam had not begun, but they tried to find a pathway through the air by sailing, as the birds sail, on outstretched wings. A peaceful, pleasant method

this, but Stevenson fixed his affection on balloons as a means for St Ives' deliverance. Meanwhile, to return to Anne St Ives, when as a captive with the other Frenchmen in the times of Napoleonic wars, he decided to leave his prison. In his descent from the Castle Rock, shrouded in sea fog, he smells wallflowers, which he crushes against. They might have been there when R.L.S. sat in Princes Street's gardened valley, but not perhaps in St Ives' day ; for they owe their home there to an officer who, thinking the bare rock might be softened in its features, mixed cheiranthus seed with clay and flung it over when a west wind blew, and so now, on the threshold of summer, as a poem in the *Scotsman* tells us :—

> ". . . in June the wallflower gold
> Is lavish of its lustre there.
> The hand that flung the earliest seed,
> A soldier's and a scholar's, lies
> Long since in dust, but still his deed
> Time's all-effacing touch defies."

St Ives found his way, after his perilous descent, to Swanston. He was ignominiously hidden by the fair Flora in the hen-house, till he was led, with precautions against noise, in by the little window to the dining-room of the cottage. There Flora, Ronald, and he, pledging one another in a glass of wine from Oporto, were discovered by his young friends' aunt, Miss Gilchrist, who owned Swanston. They start him off with the drovers and their herds, and on the way we meet the only

originals in *St Ives*. Tales of long ago of adventures on the way to the trysts, of the drove loans (still, green rights-of-way throughout the country), came thronging back to Stevenson. John Todd's tales formed part of St Ives' experiences as they marched the flocks by these loanings. One day they encountered "a tall, stoutish, elderly gentleman, a little grizzled, of a rugged, but cheerful and engaging countenance. He sat on a hill pony, wrapped in a plaid over his green coat, and was accompanied by a horsewoman, his daughter, a young lady of the most charming appearance." They journeyed together for some time, and then Sir Walter (for it was the Great Unknown) and his daughter galloped off. St Ives had noted the surly drover Sim "thaw immediately on the accost of this strange gentleman, who hailed him with a ready familiarity, proceeded at once to discuss with him the trade of droving, and the prices of cattle, and did not disdain to take a pinch from the inevitable ram's-horn." Scott looked at the amateur drover from under his shaggy brows, and asked how he came to be with Sim and Candlish. Then Stevenson makes this "original" address the young stranger in kindly tones and tell him he envies him taking this journey by Ettrick Forrest. "I have jogged many miles of it myself," he tells St Ives. "My youth lies buried about here under every heather bush, like the soul of the licentiate Lucius." He goes on to explain how a knowledge

of the history and legends of the country adds to the interest, and tells him of the tradition of the fort of a vanished race hard by. St Ives did not know till long afterwards who he had been speaking to. It was when reading a Waverley Novel he maintains, "What should I come on but the identical narrative of my green-coated gentleman upon the moors? In a moment the scene, the tones of his voice, his Northern accent, the very aspect of the earth and sky and temperature of the weather flashed back into my mind with the reality of dreams." He had asked the drovers who the genial rider was. "The Shirra, man; a'body kens the Shirra," Sim replied; but that did not convey much to St Ives. His companions looked on Scott as Buckland looked on Stevenson, as a pleasant-tongued man of their acquaintance. The middy who spent a day at Vailima exclaimed that he did not know till after he left that R. L. S. "was the josser who wrote *Treasure Island*." Likewise, St Ives did not know the gentleman with the pretty daughter, who spoke in so kindly a tone, and gave them cigars, was the man who wrote *Guy Mannering* and *The Lady of the Lake*.

A little after this meeting with Scott, St Ives and his drover companions are set upon by a gang led by a Faa of the Yetholm gipsy race, who were granted the title of Kings of Little Egypt by James V. St Ives dealt him a bad blow with the holly cudgel cut from Swanston garden. After his

French hero had turned his back on the North, Stevenson's interest in him flagged, and he laid him aside for a while, as was his custom when writing. Another hand finished *St Ives*.

After all, in life "there is but a limited stock of life's breath," says Lord Rosebery. "Some draw it in deep sighs, and know the end; some draw it in quick draughts, and have done with it. It crowds a life into a few years, and then passes away as if glad to be delivered of its message to the world."

Stevenson, when he abandoned *St Ives*, had nearly ended delivering his homily to man. He left two novels unfinished; and, especially in the case of *Weir of Hermiston*, they were as full of power as any he had yet penned. Of his work it might be said, in Dr Horatius Bonar's words, a hymn-writer of his own time and place:

"Needs there the praise of the love-written record,
The name and the epitaph graved on the stone?
The things we have lived for, let them be our story,
We ourselves but remembered by what we have done."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH
HILLS OF HOME

" There's a track across the deep,
And a path across the sea ;
But for me there's nae return
To my ain countree."

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE AUTHOR HAD THOROUGHLY enjoyed taking St Ives from out of his high-seated castle prison, escaping with him and his allies, the drovers, among "those honest grey hills," as Scott called his Border highlands, through the Cheviots to the King's highway to London. From boyhood the very name, the "Great North Road," had attracted R.L.S., so, nothing loth, he escorted St Ives by the route that messengers of war or peace, of life or death, had traversed at full speed: the route that travellers in stage-coaches had lumbered along, to be met by dare-devil, well-mounted highwaymen; but when Anne St Ives neared the end of his adventures, when provision for his future comfort and ease were in sight, Stevenson's interest in him flagged. His stepdaughter and amanuensis says: "Louis got a set-back with 'Anne' and he has put it aside for a while. He worried terribly over it and could not make it run smoothly. He read it aloud one evening, and Lloyd criticised the love scene, so Louis threw the whole thing over for a time."

Stevenson, in a letter to Barrie, exclaimed, "It is a singular thing that I should live here in the South Seas under conditions so new and so striking, and yet my imagination so continually inhabit the cold old huddle of grey hills from which we come." It was well for him that it did. He created the very atmosphere of the place of which he wrote.

When the stage on which his puppets played

their parts was on the track of the Nor'land wind, it braced and revived him as if he actually breathed the shrewd air. Disheartened with *St Ives*, he recommenced *Weir of Hermiston*, which he had let simmer for a while, with renewed vigour and zest. He had other plots in his mind. He dallied with the idea of the Young Chevalier after Culloden; with a story of Covenanters, to be called *The Killing Time*; with one *Sophia Scarlett*, which was to begin in Scotland, and then to be transported to a plantation. *Heathercat* was another. It was, as he said, to belong to Scotland, "Highland huts and peat smoke and the brown swirling rivers and wet clothes and whisky, and the romance of the past, and that indescribable bite of the whole thing at a man's heart which is or rather lies at the bottom of a story." There was also one to be called *Canonmills*. Robert Louis Stevenson had been born within a bowshot of the latter place. He looked as a child on the thick-walled, red-roofed buildings embedded in among quaint corbie-stepped houses, remnants of what had been an isolated village north of Edinburgh. Its days now are like to be few; its old sundial on a gable, which for so long numbered the hours when the sun shone, is gone. The quaint carved stones over the lintels are also gouged out; but Robert Louis Stevenson, with his hand in Cummy's, had often wandered round it and heard how the canons of Holyrood increased their revenue

by making it grind the corn of their tenants. The name pleased him, the old associations were dear; but we are left in doubt and wonderment as to what was the 'improper story' he had attached to the monks' mill, whether it was of bygone days or modern.

"My schemes," he wrote, when planning new novels, "are all in the air, and vanish and reappear again, like shapes in the clouds. I have a projected, entirely planned love story. Everybody will think it dreadfully improper, I'm afraid —called *Canonmills*." It never, as far as we know, progressed.

"It so happened," says Graham Balfour, "one afternoon at Vailima, that I was the only person available, and Louis carried me off to debate the claims of two stories which he then unfolded—*Sophia Scarlett*, and what afterwards became *Weir of Hermiston*. For three or four days Stevenson was in such a seventh heaven as he has described: he worked all day and all evening, writing or talking, debating points, devising characters, ablaze with enthusiasm, and abounding with energy. No finished story was, or ever will be, so good as *Weir of Hermiston*, shown to us in those days by the light of its author's first ardour of creation."

"Stevenson," Lang truly says, "I think, was almost always happy when he was writing; when the instrument of his art was in his fingers, his

intellectual high spirits were almost invincible." His pleasure in this last work of his bears out this statement, for his stepdaughter says, "When he abandoned *St Ives*, fortunately he picked up *Hermiston* all right, and is in better spirits at once. He has always been wonderfully clear and sustained in his dictation, but he generally makes notes in the early morning, which he elaborated as he read them aloud." He had studied Braxfield for long, and decided how he was to act as his puppet. Mrs Strong continues: "He had hardly more than a line or two of notes to keep him on the track; but he never falters for a word, giving me the sentences, with capital letters and all the stops, as easily and steadily as though he were reading from an unseen book. He walks up and down the room as I write, and his voice is so beautiful, and the story so interesting that I forget to rest."

"Belle," he said, "I see it all so clearly! The story unfolds itself before me to the least detail—there is nothing left in doubt. I never felt so before in anything I ever wrote. It will be my best work; I feel myself so sure in every word!"

Stevenson's new *Braxfield* had been no mere mirage—vanishing and reappearing like the projected *Canonmills*, transported Sophia, or the exiled Jacobite. There are certainly more "originals" of people and places in *Weir of Hermiston* than in any of his other writings. In a Vailima

letter he speaks of "my new novel," and gives the various designations under consideration. "First it ought to be called—but of course that is impossible—*Braxfield.*" Then it is to be christened either *Weir of Hermiston*, *The Lord Justice Clerk*, *The Two Kirsties of the Cauldstane Slap*, or *The Four Black Brothers.* He often wrote of it to his familiars, to the last, by the title of *The Lord Justice Clerk*; but Sidney Colvin preferred *Weir of Hermiston*, and the author bowed to his judgment. R. L. S., in this same letter, mentions that the scene of action is in the Lammermoors and Edinburgh.

Sir Sidney Colvin maintains: "If the reader seeks further to know whether the scenery of *Hermiston* can be identified with any one special place familiar to the writer's early experience, the answer, I think, must be in the negative. Rather, it is distilled from a number of different haunts and associations among the moorlands of Southern Scotland."

Still, the principal names have a smack of Midlothian about them, old neighbours of Stevenson's at Swanston. There is a veritable Hermiston in the rich carse lands west of Edinburgh—a name familiar for generations to the members and friends of St Andrew's Boating Club—where, on the canal, the rowing men hold their annual festival of boat-races, and lunch, and occasionally in the winter a Fancy Ball in Edinburgh, the dresses for

which interested the unsocial young R.L.S., who loved gay, unique clothing.

We know, of course, the old keep of the Rutherfords was not in the well-tilled plain between the hills and Corstorphine, where boating-famed Hermiston is, but where "a great rooty sweetness of bogs was in the air." It stood, like a giant milestone, on the vacant wine-red moor, till Sheriff Scott, his mind set on his own woods by Abbotsford, recommended his brother-advocate Weir to plant; and firs were dotted around, through which the winds would sigh evermore, as they grew and clothed the upland.

The home of the fighting Elliots in R.L.S.'s tale is Cauldstane Slap, which is the name of a pass in the Pentlands, a right-of-way which allows those who live in the grey city the privilege of a mountain walk for some fourteen miles across the heather, with only the sheep and the grouse, and the "infinite melancholy piping of hill birds" for company, and yet do a good half-day's work on the abhorred office stool. The very names Hermiston and Cauldstane Slap would bring back to the author the air of the Pentland slopes. He could with that vivid imagination of his, like to a wizard's skill, command the Tropics to vanish, and make for himself a path across the deep, to visit at will his ain countree.

Crossmichael is a Galloway name, a reminiscence of a walking trip in years gone by, which

ON BOARD THE 'EQUATOR'

he took in winter to the Southern Covenanters' country. The Crossmichael of his novel is not unlikely Peebles, an ancient township, a centre of human beings among the pastoral hills. It was at Crossmichael Circuit Court that Archie was to be condemned. Robert Louis Stevenson was sorely afraid his hero would have to be tried in Edinburgh, and was much relieved when his whilom contemporary and friend of his legal days, Lord Dunedin, wrote to tell him he thought the Court could be held while on circuit at Crossmichael. It helped his tale to end aright. The four Black Brothers, Robert (Hob), Gilbert (Gib), Clement, and Andrew (Dand), were to rescue Archie. People had got out of the Tolbooth in Edinburgh, but it was more within the bounds of possibility for bold Borderers to break through prison bars in their own district, where they knew every ford and lurk in the hills.

Robert Louis Stevenson's legal training helped him in planning this last story. He was conscientiously correct and painstaking in every detail. Edinburgh, he exclaims, so brands a man, and its legends as well as its laws were written deep in his memory. In christening this novel and its characters, he remembered the days he held Cummy's hand and looked on the stout walls of Canonmills, or wandered but a few steps in the other direction from his birthplace to Warriston, a square stone house on a knoll among its beech trees.

He oft-times heard how the laird there had been pummelled to death by a hireling called Weir. Mr Geddie hints in *Romantic Edinburgh* that the name of the man hung for this murder remained in the boy's mind. "Weir of Warriston has an air of tragedy, and may have suggested, Weir of Hermiston." But there is another Edinburgh history which, Mr Henley affirms, impressed itself on Stevenson's fancy, as well as that of Deacon Brodie, of which he often spoke, for he loved to sup full of horrors, and that was the story of Major Weir and his tragic death—accused of being a wizard. The name Weir, whether connected with the house that overshadowed his birthplace, or with the man connected with the Black Art, occurred to R. L. S. when he had to name a fictitious Macqueen. These two anecdotes both belonged to the author's own ancient city—which he vowed he would only forget when his right hand forgot its cunning—the hand that at topmost speed let fall the pen, and left the half-told tale. *Weir of Hermiston* is like a broken pillar; though incomplete, it remains a memorial more lasting than the table tombstone crumbling in the evanescent decay of the South—a memorial of his skill, which, as his best biographer says, "Surely no son of Scotland has died leaving with his last breath a worthier tribute to the land he loved."

As to the church where Archie Weir first beheld young Kirstie Elliot, R. L. S. walked there in

1875 one Sunday, with his father. He heard, as they neared Glencorse, "the clinkum clank o' Sabbath bells," and noted "the solemn elders at the plate stand drinkin' deep the pride o' state." The minister was veritably a Mr Torrance, whose gloved hands, moth-eaten gown, grown rusty in the constant service of the antique world, strongly impressed one listener. The lank-haired young man noted the ploughmen perplexed with leisure, the alert collies curled like sable wolves close to their sleeping shepherd masters, while the decrepit herd of men with quavering voice held forth. The good man's sermon, long-winded though it was, R. L. S. did not find tedious. He was busy noting everything minutely. He sat and etched the scene in indelible ink on his memory. He laid away the picture and twice printed it, in verse, as "A Lowden Sabbath Morning"; and again in his unfinished masterpiece, where Archie, truly Weir of Hermiston, by blood and inheritance—not like his great father, by name only—after many a dull Sunday, hearkening little to Mr Torrance's lengthy harangues, finds at last a pleasing thing to look upon. "On a Sunday, 1875," Stevenson writes, "I've been to church, and am not depressed a great step. I was at that beautiful church my *petit poème en prose* was about. It is a little cruciform place with heavy cornices and string course to match, and steep slate roof. The small kirkyard is full of old gravestones. One of a Frenchman from Dunkerque—

I suppose he died prisoner in the military prison hard by—and one, the most pathetic memorial I ever saw, a poor school slate, in a wooden frame, with the inscription cut into it, evidently by the father's own hand. In church old Mr Torrance preached—over eighty, and a relic of times forgotten, with his black thread gloves and mild, old, foolish face." There that Sunday, Stevenson, his brown eyes radiant with vivacity, also observed, listening grave and respectful to Mr Torrance, whose voice leapt, "like an ill-played clarionet, from key to key," as if it had all been a revelation, was a great lawyer, "our Justice General." So Judges after Weir's day were heritors and church attenders at Glencorse. R. L. S. disclaims, in a note to *Underwoods*, that he had a certain parish in his eye when he wrote of a Lowden Sunday morning; but in a letter to Mrs Sitwell he calls it the place of 'my *poème en prose*.' His first work, a rare pamphlet now, was about those Pentland Hills, which were always very dear to his heart.

Speaking of his new novel, in a letter to S. R. Crockett, fearing that the plot is not good, "but Lord Justice Clerk Hermiston ought to be a plum," he asks, "Do you know where the road crosses the burn under Glencorse Church? Go there and say a prayer for me, *morituri salutat*. See that it's a sunny day. I would like it to be a Sunday. I shall never take that walk by Fishers' Tryst and Glencorse—I shall never see Auld Reekie, I shall

never set my foot again upon the heather. Here I am until I die, and here will I be buried. The word is out and the doom written."

As to the originals of characters in *Weir of Hermiston*, to begin with, Stevenson himself affirms his Lord of Session is Robert Macqueen of Braxfield. He had never forgotten looking on Raeburn's portrait of the resolute Scottish Judge, who was so well versed in intricacies of the law and administered justice with a strong hand and a brutal facetiousness of tongue. Anecdotes as to his sabre cuts of speech flourish and survive. "You may look," said Robert Louis Stevenson, "into the queer face of that portrait for as long as you will, but you will not see any hole or corner for timidity in it."

In 1877 there was an exhibition of Sir Henry Raeburn's works in Edinburgh, and R. L. S. went to study and review the collection. In his own words: "The Scotchmen of to-day walked about among the Scotchmen of two generations ago. The people who sat for these pictures are not yet ancestors; they are still relations." Among them he was "irresistibly attracted" by the portrait of Braxfield, Lord Justice Clerk. "If I know gusto in painting when I see it, this canvas was painted with rare enjoyment. The tart, rosy, humorous look of the man, his nose like a cudgel, his face resting squarely on the jowl, has been caught and perpetuated with something that looks like brotherly love."

Lord Cockburn, R. L. S.'s literary predecessor on the Pentlands, in his *Memorials*, has left recollections of his brother Judge who was Stevenson's truly *paper* Lord. James VI. of Scotland, first Stuart to rule over Britain from sea to sea, had said of the Senators of the College of Justice, to give them their full title, when raised from bar to bench: "I've made the carls Lords, but not their carlines Ladys." Lord Hermiston being what is called a paper Lord, his wife remained Mrs Weir.

King Edward VII. revoked the stubborn James's decision, and now the carlines share their husband's honours and names as Ladies. Lord Cockburn did not take his title from Bonnie Bonaly, where he had become a neighbour of Robert Louis Stevenson's grandfather, setting up, when he married, his household gods at an old farmhouse close by Colinton, gradually transforming it into an enviable towered dwelling-place surrounded with gardens and shrubberies, all of his own planting. Lord Rosebery recommends Cockburn's *Memorials of His Time* to be read every year by those who love Scott's own romantic town. He draws from his own observation—a sure source of knowledge—the manners and customs and appearance of a now departed Edinburgh, and his account is as lifelike and interesting as Raeburn's gallery.

Here is his word portrait of Adam Weir of Hermiston: "But the giant of the bench was Braxfield.

His very name makes people start yet. Strong-built and dark, with rough eyebrows, powerful eyes, threatening lips, and a low, growling voice, he was like a formidable blacksmith. His accent and his dialect were exaggerated Scotch, his language, like his thoughts, short, strong, and conclusive."

A few days before his death, on 1st December, R. L. S. wrote to Andrew Lang: "For the portrait of Braxfield much thanks! It is engraved from the same Raeburn portrait that I saw in '76 or '77 with so extreme a gusto that I have ever since been Braxfield's humble servant, and am now trying, as you know, to stick him into a novel. Alas! one might as well try to stick in Napoleon. The picture shall be framed and hung up in my study. Not only as a memento of you, but as a perpetual encouragement to do better with his Lordship." Raeburn's picture was left by a descendant, Mrs Macqueen, to the Parliament House in 1892. Braxfield now looks down on "the mart of scandal," where the bewigged advocates chatter and parade, waiting for hire. "Send me Cockburn's *Memorials*," wrote Robert Louis Stevenson from his far-off isle. He wanted to restudy this pen-and-ink sketch of Braxfield, and, no doubt, as he read he remembered how the delineator, like himself, had known every dell and dimple of his hills, and there, "well neukit in the muckle Pentlands' knees," had read Tacitus one summer.

Cockburn recalls all the convivial crew of legal and literary wits who lived in George Square in Braxfield's days. It was of President Blair, ready-tongued John Clerk said, "My man! God Almighty spared nae pains when he made your brains." This remark might have aptly applied also to a foreign-looking advocate who never practised, whose box for deeds in the Parliament House, with "R. L. Stevenson" on its brass plate, was empty of even a spurious roll of documents, but who was busy all the while, covering reams of paper, which eventually were printed as *Memoirs and Portraits* and *Virginibus Puerisque*. He tried words—put them into the dock, cross-examined them till he found the one which best expressed his meaning.

Robert Louis Stevenson enjoyed to the full the grim, merciless humour of Braxfield as well as his unshakable determination to administer justice according to his lights, which were brilliant if somewhat charged with lightning. He put his heel down with a deadly force on law-breaking and also on sedition-mongers. If he came back now, he would keep the hangman busy, for to many could he truly say, in these times as well as his own: "Ye may think yoursel'a gey clever chiel, but you'd be nane the waur o'a hanging." "Come awa', come awa', Mr Horner, and help me to hang ane o' thae daamed scoondrels," he said to a juror who was passing behind the bench when he was trying Muir, an advocate who held reformed radical views, but who

LORD BRAXFIELD

From a painting by Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A.

By kind permission of the Faculty of Advocates

would nowadays have been in politics a Liberal Unionist, so much have our views changed—we say 'advanced.' This Thomas Muir favoured the revolutionary methods in full flood then in France, and those who sat on the seats of the mighty determined to check this, for fear the contagion should spread to this side of the channel. Braxfield, with satisfied relish, condemned the unfortunate Muir to the living death of Botany Bay. The future adventures of this then advanced Radical, which are mentioned in a book recently published, form a history so full of incident and romance, if it were not a true tale it would be a mixture of a sensational tract and a boy's penny-dreadful.

Muir found favour with the governor. His parents in Glasgow had given him a pocket Bible, from which he conducted a service on Sundays, with a few others, who shared a hut. The second paraphrase, "O God of Bethel," was his favourite hymn of praise and prayer, and always sung. That Bible, bought in Glasgow, 1793, was truly a life preserver.

Muir was kidnapped, 1796, by a Captain Dawes of *The Otter*, sent by George Washington, who was indignant at the sentence passed on the advocate reformer.

The Otter was wrecked on the then lonesome coast of Western America. Muir and two sailors alone escaped. He lost them, and for 4000 miles travelled alone among savages, and finally arriv-

ed at Panama. There he was shipped for Cadiz, and when nearing Europe a British man-of-war attacked his ship, and after a brief and bloody encounter boarded her, took a few prisoners, and cleared the decks by throwing the dead overboard. Muir was reckoned among the latter. His face interested the officer in command, and as he stooped over the prostrate man his foot dislodged Muir's Bible from his pocket. It was blood-stained and bullet-riddled. The officer picked it up, read Muir's name, and recognised him as an old and intimate comrade at Glasgow College. Muir was unconscious, but not dead, so his brother Scot had his wounds attended to, and he recovered. His many wanderings, his weary pilgrimage, ended in Paris, near which he dwelt for years. After the passing of the Reform Bill a monument was reared to him in the heart of the fair city where Braxfield had condemned him. Muir had spoken three hours in his own defence, and his speech had been met with cheers. "In the eyes of the Lord Justice Clerk there was observed a gleam of the wicked satisfaction of a coarse, cruel man who sees his chance. 'I must remark,' he said the following day in his summing up, 'that the indecent applause which was given Mr Muir last night confirms me in the belief that a spirit of discontent still lurks in the minds of the people and that it would be dangerous to allow him to remain in this country.'"

Braxfield's pitiless sentences, his fearlessness in

administering the law, his ruthless remarks, his taunting jests, attracted R. L. S. He laid bare his plot for *Weir of Hermiston* to his correspondents. Stories, he held, should not finish badly. He protested against the end of Richard Feverel.

"It might have so happened, but it needed not; and unless needs must, we have no right to pain our readers. I have had a heavy case of conscience about my Braxfield story.

"Braxfield—only his name is Hermiston—has a son who is condemned to death; plainly there is a fine, tempting fitness about this, and I meant he was to hang. But now, on considering my minor characters, I saw there were five people who would —in a sense, who must—break prison and attempt rescue. They were capable, hardy folks, too, who might very well succeed. Why should not young Hermiston escape clear out of the country?"

R. L. S.'s first idea had been to make Hermiston pass sentence on his own son, but, that not being allowable, he explains in a letter, "The Justice Clerk tries some people capitally on circuit. Certain evidence cropping up, the charge is transferred to the Justice Clerk's own son. Of course in the next trial the Justice Clerk is excluded, and the case is called before the Lord Justice General."

Stevenson mentions Muir's trial when speaking of Braxfield in *Virginibus Puerisque*, and we wonder he had not made Archie Weir into a Radical Muir. His Rutherford training would have al-

lowed him to adopt the Bible as a shield and buckler against woes and bullets.

Cockburn, speaking of Braxfield, says: "It is impossible to condemn his conduct as a criminal judge too gravely or too severely. It was a disgrace to the age. A dexterous and practical trier of ordinary cases, he was harsh to prisoners even in his jocularity, and to every counsel whom he chose to dislike."

Stevenson thus describes Weir over against him: "My Lord Hermiston occupied the bench in the red robes of criminal jurisdiction, his face framed in the white wig. Honest all through, he did not affect the virtue of impartiality: this was no case for refinement; there was a man to be hanged, he would have said, and he was hanging him. Nor was it possible to see his Lordship and acquit him of gusto in the task. It was plain he gloried in the exercise of his trained faculties, in the clear sight which pierced at once into the joint of fact, in the rude unvarnished gibes with which he demolished every figment of defence. He took his ease and jested, unbending in that solemn place with some of the freedom of the tavern, and the rag of man with the flannel round his neck was hunted gallowsward with jeers."

Truly R. L. S., as he said, liked to draw a grim picture. "My Braxfield," he writes, "is already a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and, so far as he has gone, *far* my best character."

With one of these touches of "Autolycus roguery," "the streak of Puck" that R.L.S. was credited by two author friends with possessing, he chose to mate his coarse-natured, coarse-tongued Lord Justice Clerk to his own grandmother, Mrs Robert Stevenson! He had been busy with the *Family of Engineers* at the time he resurrected Braxfield.

He complained while at this work that the souls of his ancestors weighed upon him. He studied his father's mother. He found her full of sanctimonious sentiments and but a poor housekeeper, as she employed only the elect, and they used their piety to cloak their inefficiency. He knew simple, practical Robert Stevenson must have suffered from his mismanaged house and incompetent servants. As a punishment to his grandmother he married her to Hermiston. R.L.S. rebelled at cant. "My father," he says, "was distinctly religious, not pious." He took care that no one should think he threw a gibe at his father's views, or say his straightforward, honest father had inherited the shibboleth of hypocritical cant: Mrs Stevenson, in her grandson's story, makes an excellent foil to her "convivial, unreverend husband."

Mrs Weir is, we are told, "pious, tender, tearful, and incompetent," with the timid obstinacy of the weak. "A fushionless quean, a feckless carline," her humble neighbours at Hermiston called her. Stevenson wrote, "No. 1 Baxter Place, my grand-

father's house, must have been a paradise for boys. Within, there was the seemingly rather awful rule of the old gentleman, tempered, I fancy, by the mild and devout mother with her 'Keep me's.'"

To the credit of the author's grandmother, who spent much time reading books of piety, who misruled the table of the founder of the Northern Lights, she reared three sons who lit "unnumbered stars of God," which were guiding stars for seamen. A jest of Braxfield which Cockburn says, among thousands preserved of his rough humour, was "one with fun in it without immodesty." A butler gave up his place because his Lordship's wife was always scolding him. "Lord," he exclaimed, "you've little to complain o'. Ye may be thankfu' ye're no married to her." Mackillop of *Weir of Hermiston* maybe saw that the Christian cook prepared his dinner well, or his lordship's cellar saved him from indigestion.

"My grandmother," writes R. L. S., "remained to the end devout and unambitious, occupied with her Bible, her children, and her house, easily shocked, and associating largely with a clique of godly parasites. The cook was a godly woman, the butcher a Christian man, and the table suffered. The scene has been often described to me of my grandfather sawing, with darkened countenance, at some indissoluble joint. 'Preserve me, my dear, what kind of reedy, stringy beast is this?'—of the joint removed, the pudding substituted and uncovered,

and of my grandmother's anxious glance and hasty deprecatory comment, 'Just mismanaged!'"

We know how like to this is Hermiston's table.

Archie, the son of the timid Jean Rutherford and formidable Weir, has no specified original, but R. L. S. evidently recalled many of the puzzles of his own childish days when he makes Mrs Weir and her son argue together.

"The woman's quietism and piety passed on to Archie's different nature undiminished; but whereas in her it was a native sentiment, in him it was only an *implanted dogma*. Nature and the child's pugnacity at times revolted," and Archie, aged seven, disputed over texts with his mother.

"'I can't see it,' said the little Rabbi, and wagged his head," is no doubt a recollection of how he contended and argued with Cummy or his mother over some problem. As Archie grew up he was somewhat in his solitariness like R. L. S.

Innes said he knew Weir in his hobbledehoy days: "No one met Archie—a malady most incident to only sons."

R. L. S. knew he had from his youthful outlook been hard on some of his fellow-citizens. "I sometimes wonder if you and I—who are a pair of sentimentalists—are quite good judges of poor men," Lord Glenalmond, Archie's friend, wisely remarked. "The Shrimp," Lord Glenkindie, who told Hermiston of his son's criticism of his judgment on Jopp, is recognisable as a judge in Stevenson's

Edinburgh days. Glenalmond is made up of the best of many. The celebrated Dr Gregory is, of course, from life. He is of medical mixture fame, and speaks to Archie in a kindly manner when the lad is smarting under his father's rebuke. The doctor saw Archie was ill in body and mind. He tells him a tale of Hermiston's anxiety when Archie lay "gey ill of the measles." The anecdote might be called infinitely little, and yet its meaning was immense.

"It isn't everyone Hermiston would miss," adds the sage doctor in his cocked hat—a piece of antiquity—as he goes off again on his rounds, and out of Robert Louis Stevenson's page, where he had put him to be borne in remembrance. Another true character flits across a page. The Ettrick Shepherd is mentioned as a boon companion of Dand Elliot, the poetic Black Brother. Hector, Hogg's good collie, would have told of merry meetings if he had had speech granted him like Maeterlinck's Tylo. Of the two heroines of *Weir of Hermiston*, Stevenson asserts the older Kirstie grew into importance as he progressed, and from a subordinate position came into the forefront of his stage. Kirstie Elliot enters as Mrs Weir's devoted attendant and distant relation, a hard-working, shrewd clanswoman. "Kirstie was a woman in a thousand, clean, capable, notable. She ran the house with her whole intemperate soul in a bustle not without buffets."

My dear Canny,

Henmith goes my new book in which you will find some places that you know; I hope you will like it: I do. The name of the girl at Lime Kilns (as will appear if the squeal is ever written) was Hastie, and I conceive she was an ancestress of yours; as David was no doubt some kind of relative of mine. I have no time for more, but send my love; and remembrances to your brother ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

When Archie went to live at Hermiston after his declaration at the Speculative, Kirstie blossoms out. She had transferred the leal attachment she had borne the mother to the son. "It savoured of the hero-worship of a maiden aunt and the idolatry due to a god." By her cleverness of tongue, her graphic speech, she holds him thrall; when in the evening Archie sat and loved to hear the squall's bugle on the moorland and "watch the fire prosper on the earthy fuel, and the smoke winding up the chimney, and drink deep of the pleasures of shelter," Kirstie recited to him tales of their mutual forebears, the Elliots, a race famed even on the warful Borders for fighting. "Like so many people of her class, she was a brave narrator; her place was on the hearth-rug, and she made it a rostrum, mimeing all her stories as she told them, fitting them with vital details." The glamour of these dramatically told tales Robert Louis Stevenson knew, for his second mother, Cummy, had the knack. "You nearly made me a play-actor," he said to his nurse.

"Me?" said Cummie, shocked. "Aye, woman, by the dramatic way you taught me to recite the hymns." Cummy was a clever, capable woman, but, unlike Kirstie, was patient and gentle. Still, Kirstie's manner of telling the Border ballads in prose, the fine flow of words, fascinating by her power of depicting the traditions she had heard, and beguiling Archie in his loneliness, recalled

Cummy as she had entertained a small, solitary, house-bound child, with many a "quo' he and quo' she, her voice sinking into a whisper over the supernatural or the horrific." The battle of the Indian shawls between Kirstie and her sister-in-law—Kirstie in the real old-toned one, Mrs Elliot in the new and more Glasgow or Paisley coloured one—was a remembrance of a well-told family feud his clever-tongued Cummy had beguiled an afternoon with by the fireside clime for her charge. Kirstie developed so rapidly that her author confessed he was in love with her himself. What her ultimate destiny was to be, with her loyalty and love of Archie and her fiery spirit, we know not. With her ready wit she or Cummy was the sort who a few centuries earlier would have had boiling lead ready heated to pour on any assailant of the peel tower who approached unwarily near the studded doorway, with intent to enter by force or fire.

Lord Hermiston was, after his son's trial and his escape to America, to die of shock, a natural outcome of the mental strain and years of convivial living. "I do not know what became of old Kirstie," says his amanuensis, Mrs Strong; "but that character grew and strengthened so in the writing, that I am sure he had some dramatic destiny for her."

The sterling Kirstie, "high in flesh and voice and colour, who ran the house with her whole in-

temperate soul," was half a century old when she was Archie's housekeeper ; but we read that the years had "but caressed and embellished her and left no trace of silver in her *golden* hair." Her nephews, the four brothers of Cauldstane Slap, were dark men. Their sister, "who came like a postscript in the year of Camperdown," her aunt described to Archie as "black's your hat, she's a kind of a handsome jaud—a kind o' gipsy." Romany blood is not uncommon in the Borders, where at Yetholm there long reigned over a swarthy band of subjects, the royal house of Faa, Kings of Little Egypt. They were a fine-looking tribe, so it often happened that the comely Eastern-eyed maids cast their glamour over and mated with the neighbouring moss-troopers, thus adding to many a raiding race a dusky colour and a roving recklessness.

R. L. S. took infinite pains to equip the well-favoured brunette he created, the junior Kirstie, in becoming raiment. He studied so that she might be figged out in the correct fashion of the period she dwelt in, not unlike to that of the beginning of the second decade of this century, for fashion, like species, reverts. "We had such an interesting time to-day," his stepdaughter records, "looking over fashion books for the heroine's clothes. Her dress is grey, to which I suggested the addition of a pink kerchief. This afternoon Louis came into my room to announce that in her evening walk Kirstie would wear pink silk

stockings to match her kerchief; he said he could use the incident very artfully to develop her character." The glimpses we have of the tawny-skinned, cloudy-haired Kirstie, so smart in her Glasgow "braws," with the Cairngorm brooch clasping her violet sarcenet and the breast-knot of primroses, is a captivating picture of a lass full of conceits and fripperies, attractive to look on, and pleasing even to meet in print. Mrs Strong records how Louis and she "have been writing, working away every morning like steam-engines on *Hermiston.*" "The story," she adds, "*is all the more thrilling as he says he has taken me for young Kirstie.* Both were gipsily dark, 'unmistakably feminine'; like ripe fruit on the espaliers their sun-bepainted hue appears."

The writer of *With Stevenson in Samoa* remarks Mrs Strong "was headstrong, talkative, and generally got her own way." In the too brief acquaintance we make with the Black Brothers' sister, we learn she is given to wilful moods, her spirits flickering and fluttering, as the events of the moment swayed her. The lines R. L. S. addressed to Mrs Strong, "his friend and scribe," might well apply to coquettish, wayward Miss Christina Elliot :—

> "Or see, as in a looking-glass,
> Her graceful, dimpled person pass,
> Nought great therein but eyes and hair
> . . . . .
> May you be never done

Your pretty busy round to run,
And show with changing frocks and scents,
Your ever-varying lineaments,
Your saucy steps, your languid grace,
Your sullen and your smiling face,
Sound sense, true valour, baby fears,
And bright unreasonable tears."

The pity o't is we have barely been admitted to an intimacy with the bewitching minor Kirstie when the fatal day in December came, and Stevenson's story of the Hanging Judge and the two Kirsties of Cauldstane Slap was left unfinished, abruptly ending in the middle of a sentence. We know from notes left that young Kirstie had to wade through deep waters, and we feel grieved for the dainty, foolish girl, for whom her original and her author designed becoming dresses, both working together in high spirits at the acceptable task, and sparing no trouble to be exact in every item.

The luxuriant hibiscus flower, emblem of the South, and the hardy thistle of his native land, are engraven on the table tombstone which marks R. L. S.'s exalted mountain grave. But there is also a final original picture in *Weir of Hermiston* which links his oft-abused but never-forgotten "Auld Reekie" with the achievement of his last fine success in Samoa, the swift exit from this life, which came as he desired when in his full strength. "I have no taste for old age," he truly said. Archie Weir, quivering with repugnance at the hanging of Jopp, goes to the Speculative Society, which,

Innes reminded him, met that evening in the stately rooms within the University precincts. "A history of the Speculative Society is a history of the best talent that has been reared in Scotland during the most valuable eighty years the country has ever seen," wrote, in 1842, William Macbean, a young secretary of the Speculative, who died aged nineteen. Lord Cockburn, in his *Memorials*, says, "No better arena could possibly have been provided for the exercise of the remarkable young men it excited"; and Stevenson, in his Valedictory Address, said, "Yes, if we should have here some budding Scott, or if the new Shakespeare should here be incubating his fine parts, we shall all, gentlemen, have a hand in the finished article." Truly, the Speculative with its old associations has done good work. We read in R. L. S.'s unfinished novel that on this Tuesday, "It chanced he (Archie) was president that night. He sat in the same room where the Society still meets, only, the portraits were not there; the men who afterwards sat for them were then but beginning their careers. The same lustre of many tapers shed its light over their meeting, the same chair perhaps supported him that so many of us have sat in since." R. L. S., when a rather lonesome young legal student in 1869, was elected a member of the Speculative. He learned there to enjoy companionship of his contemporaries, and flung himself into the thick of the battle of arguments

which were fought there. He was elected one of the five Presidents in 1872, and he also, like Archie, opened a debate on the question, "Is the abolition of capital punishment desirable?" and, like Archie, found no seconder. Some of his fellow-members marvelled how R. L. S., who posed as a consistent idler, had acquired the deftness and rhythm of his style, despite which he was ineffectual as a speaker.

Moors mentions in *Samoa* that Stevenson lectured on the Marquesas. "It was more like a talk. His voice was clear and distinct, but lacked in volume. It was again made abundantly clear that he was not an eloquent public speaker, but he was interesting, entertaining, and informative."

President Archie "signed to Innes (whom he had just fined, and who had just impeached his ruling) to succeed him in the chair, slipped down from the platform, and took his place by the chimney-piece, the shine of many wax tapers from above illuminating his pale face, the glow of the great red fire relieving from behind his slim figure." Curiously enough, later in the story, R. L. S. describes Archie, and again it might have been a sketch of himself in his unlessoned years when he joined the "Spec." "This young man, slim, graceful, dark, with the inscrutable half-smile," Kirstie studied from the gallery of Glencorse Church. With Stevenson's unblurred memory and that knack of recalling the past which he found

took the sting from exile, in the person of Archie Weir he enjoyed his last visit to the "Spec" as he wandered, panther-like, up and down his study at Vailima. "The stately old room, aglow with many candles, the books, the portraits, the pious commemoration of the dead," he saw again, not dreaming that soon among the latter would be treasured the MS. of his Valedictory Address, delivered there in 1873 and sent back from Vailima. Also a portrait, from the far-off island home, of himself. This his ardent admirer (his successor at Swanston), Lord Guthrie, presented on behalf of another absent friend and companion of his legal days. He pointed to the words of Jeffrey which are written below the adjoining portrait of Francis Horner, and aptly applied them to R. L. S.: "First the ornament of this institution, and then of his country." There is another prized and unique relic of R. L. S. also in his "dear old 'Spec'"; it is the flag which succeeded the Union Jack as his pall. The former had floated gaily over Vailima on the fateful 3rd December 1894. By eventide it was lowered and spread over his body. The natives promptly cleft a way through the entanglement of bush to bear the "Teller of Tales" to his resting-place. On the coffin, up the ascent, was the ensign of his yacht, the *Casco*, in which he had sailed among the islands of the Pacific. It was taken home and presented to the Speculative Society, which, in the coiled perplexities of youth, he

THE PENTLAND HILLS FROM FAIRMILEHEAD
"Hills of Ho—

thought was "about the best thing in Edinburgh." His old familiars who come for old time's sake to look around the conservatively candle-lit rooms, think of the verses he wrote in 1872 when, with "long hatchet-face, black hair, and haunting gaze that follows you as you move about the room," he was a newly elected President :—

"He is not dead, this friend, not dead,
But in the path we mortals tread
Got some few trifling steps ahead,
And nearer to the end.
So that you too, once past the bend,
Shall meet again as face to face, this friend
You fancy dead.
The while you travel forward
Mile by mile,
He loiters with a backward smile."

The younger ever-rising men who take their places in the Speculative Society on wintry Tuesday evenings are proud to have that much-travelled and worn ensign amongst them. They treasure it as a befitting pall, his guardian aloft in his sea journeyings, of the man with "the heart of gold" who delighted in their august Society's old-world rules and ways. They think of him, the most famous man of letters who has belonged to the Society since Scott, laid, as he desired, "weary and well content, in his grave on Vaëa crest," which looks down on the richest panorama of tropical luxuriance, to Vailima, R.L.S.'s Abbotsford. The house he planned and built is now remodelled and in strangers' hands. His father's

furniture he sent for to Scotland is scattered. Truly, his successors in the "dear old 'Spec'" may ponder over the truth of the ancient proverb current among the natives of the islands he visited in his South Sea Odyssey: "The coral waxes, the palm grows, but man departs."

INDEX

Admiral Guinea, 100, 101.
Adventures of John Nicholson, 154.
"Alan Breck," 128 *et seq.*
"Alison Graeme," 146.
Ancient Mariner, The, 22.
Anstruther, 46, 49.
Appin, 133.
"Arethusa," 70, 85 *et seq.*
"Athelred," 75.

Baildon, Mr Bellyse, 39, 50, 154.
Balfour, Dr George, 18, 24, 26, 28, 29.
Graham, 98, 116, 181.
James, 129.
Miss, 15, 21, 23–26, 34.
Rev. Dr, 24, 26, 102, 190.
of Burley, 47.
Barrie, J. M., 179.
Baxter, Charles, 67, 68, 70, 71, 77, 82, 128, 140, 154.
Beau Austin, 100.
Beggars' Opera, The, 108.
Bell Rock Lighthouse, 65.
Black Arrow, The, 127.
Blackie, Prof. J. S., 53.
Body Snatcher, The, 123.
Bonar, Dr Horatius, 175.
Braxfield, Lord, 109; see also *Weir of Hermiston.*
Brodie, Deacon, 106 *et seq.*; see also *Deacon Brodie.*
Brown, Dr John, 52.
"Buckland, John," 164 *et seq.*
Burial of Sir John Moore, 13.
"Burly," 97.

Calton Cemetery, 77.
Campbell, Colin, 130 *et seq.*, 137.
Lord Archibald, 149.
Canonmills, 180, 182.
Carlyle, Dr Alexander, 144.
Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, 116 *et seq.*
Catriona, 140 *et seq.*
Cauldstane Slap, 35, 129, 184.
Chambers's Journal, 26, 36, 39.
Charity Bazaar, The, 33, 35.
Child's Garden of Verses, 7, 10, 14, 15, 30, 33, 63, 65, 126.
Chronicle of Friendship, 89, 159.
"Cigarette," 70, 83 *et seq.*, 92.
Cockburn, Lord, 190, 192, 196, 198.
Colinton, 10, 21, 26, 115, 190.
Manse, 24, 26, 27.
College Memories, 42.
Colvin, Sir Sidney, 118, 183.
Crane, Walter, 91, 117.
Crockett, S. R., 188.
Crossmichael, 184.
Culross, 13.
Cunningham, Alison, "Cummy," 10–14, 17, 38, 57, 90, 101, 139, 180, 185, 199, 201.

"David Balfour," 128 *et seq.*, 135.
Deacon Brodie (Play), 99, 100, 104, 114.
Degraver, Dr, 109.
Dogs, Essay on, 54.
Dunedin, Lord, 185.
Dynamiter, The, 153.

Ebb Tide, The, 156, 166.
Edinburgh Academy, 38, 69.
Eeles, Lieut., 164.
Erskine, Hon. Henry, 109.
Eskgrove, Lord, 109.
Ettrick Shepherd, 200.

Father and Son, 127.
Fergusson, Robert, 129.
Ferrier, James W., 67, 70, 71.
Finsbury Tontine, The, 155.
First and Last Things, 67.
"Flora," 169, 172.
Footnote to History, A, 167.
Foreigner at Home, 125
Forest Notes, 157, 158.
Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, 11.
Fraser, Simon, 143.

Gladstone, W. E., 127.
"Glenalmond, Lord," 199.

Glencorse, 187, 188.
"Glenesk, Lord," 117.
"Glenkindie, Lord," 199.
Gosse, Edmund, 127, 130.
Grant, Miss, 145.
Mrs, of Laggan, 143.
Gregory, Dr, 200.
Guthrie, Lord, 44, 208.
Guy Mannering, 174.

Hackston of Rathillet, 47, 49.
Hailes, Lord, 109.
Hanging Judge, The, 100.
Heathercat, 180.
Henley, Anthony, 159.
W. E., 64, 95 *et seq.*, 104 *et seq.*, 126, 130, 186.
Hermiston, 184.
Holy Fair, The, 27.
House in the Marsh, The, 104.

Inland Voyage, An, 86 *et seq.*, 91, 117, 118.
"Innes," 199, 207.
Irving, Sir Henry, 119.

Jenkin, Mrs Fleeming, 36, 37.
Prof. Fleeming, 53, 70, 103.
Jim the Penman, 104.
John Knox, Essay on, 18.
"John Silver," 126.

Kaiulani, Princess, 167.
Kelland, Professor, 53.
Kidnapped, 128 *et seq.*, 139, 156.
Killing Time, The, 104, 180.
"Kirstie Elliot," 200 *et seq.*
(younger), 203.

Lady of the Lake, 174.
Lang, Andrew, 29, 68, 70, 118, 144, 181.
Leith, Water of, 9, 19, 25.
Life and Work, 168.
Lillie, David, 105.
Longman's Magazine, 46.
Lord Justice Clerk, The, 183 *et seq.*

"Loudon, Dodd," 160, 162.
Low, W. H., 89, 159, 161, 163.

Macaire, 100.
Macgregor, James Mohr, 144.
Mackay, Æneas, Prof., 128.
David N., 136, 138.
MacKellar, Miss Mary, 136.
M'Kerrow, Margaret, 27.
Mackintosh, Mr David, 143.
Maeterlinck, M., 5, 200.
Magus Moor, 47.
Master of Ballantrae, The, 123, 147 *et seq.*
Mattos, Madame de, 64.
May, Island of, 43.
Memorials of His Time, 190, 191.
Memories and Portraits, 17, 192.
Merry Men, The, 123.
"Michael Finsbury," 154.
Mowbray, Mr, 116.
Muir, Thomas, 192 *et seq.*

Nerli, Count, 145.
New Arabian Nights, 153.
North Berwick, 39.
Nutt, Mr Alfred, 149.

Oban Times, 136.
Odyssey, The, 127.
O'Meara, 159.
Osbourne, S. Lloyd, 91, 124, 153, 155 *et seq.*, 179.

Palizzi, Mons., 159.
Pall Mall Magazine, 98.
Pardesous, Mr, 160.
Parliament House, 77.
Pavilion on the Links, The, 142.
Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured, 101.
Penny Whistles, 126.
Pentland Rising, The, 33, 34.
Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh, 106, 170.
Pinero, Sir Arthur, 100, 110.
Portfolio, The, 52.
Prestongrange, Lord, 142.

INDEX

Providence and the Guitar, 158.
Punch, 140.

Raeburn, Sir Henry, 189, 191.
Random Memories, 146.
Rathillet, 49.
Rhymes and Rhythms, 95.
Roads, 52.
Rob Roy, 134.
Romantic Edinburgh, 187.
"Romney," 161.
"Ronald Gilchrist," 170, 172.
Rosebery, Lord, 175.
Rullion Green, 33–35.
Ruskin, John, 12, 147.

St Ives, 169 *et seq.*, 179, 182.
Scotsman, 65, 172.
Scott, Sir Walter, 6, 16, 23, 29, 42, 134, 148, 173, 179, 184.
Scribner's Magazine, 157.
Sea Cook, The, see *Treasure Island.*
Sentimental Journey, The, 117.
Sharpe, Archbishop, 47, 48.
"Sim," 173, 174.
Simpson, Sir Walter, 44, 56, 67, 69, 70 *et seq.*, 80, 82 *et seq.*
"Sir William Johnson," 148.
Skerryvore Lighthouse, 64.
Smith, Mr, bookseller, 102.
Sophia Scarlett, 180, 181.
Speculative Society, 201, 206, 209.
Stephen, Leslie, 95.
Stevenson, Alan, 64, 65.
Mrs R. L., 57, 91, 100, 163.
Mrs Robert, 179 *et seq.*
Mrs Thos., 10, 14, 15, 17–20, 24, 25, 35, 36, 41, 166.
R. A. M., 63, 65, 89, 159.
Robert, 65, 105.
Thos., 13, 20, 34, 37, 41, 54, 58, 91, 100, 105, 117, 124, 125, 128, 153.
Stewart, James, of the Glens, 131 *et seq.*, 136, 138, 142.
Stewart of Ardshiel, 130 *et seq.*
Stonefield, Lord, 109.
Strachey, Mr, 124.
Strong, Mrs, 169, 171, 179, 182, 202, 204.
Swanston Cottage, 41, 44, 170.
village, 45, 51, 115.
Swinton, Lord, 109.

Talk and Talkers, 64, 67, 75.
Temple Bar, 39.
Thrawn Janet, 123, 142.
Ticonderoga, 149.
Todd, John, shepherd, 44–46, 173.
"Tommy Haddon," 164.
Tom Sawyer, 127.
Torrance, Rev. Mr, 187, 188.
Torryburn, 12.
Toymaker of Nuremberg, The, 100.
Travels with a Donkey, 91, 99, 117, 118.
Treasure Island, 123 *et seq.*, 140, 157, 174.
Trial of James Stewart, 136.

Underwoods, 26, 64, 89, 90, 188.
"Utterson, Mr," 116, 159.

Vailima, 5, 58, 145, 158, 204.
Vailima Letters, 171.
Virginibus Puerisque, 99, 118, 192, 195.
Vision, The, 143.

"Weir, Archie," 117, 186, 199, 207.
Mrs, 197.
Weir of Hermiston, 175, 180 *et seq.*, 195 *et seq.*, 200, 205.
Wells, H. G., 67.
Westminster Budget, 145.
With Stevenson in Samoa, 204.
Wrecker, The, 156, 160, 161, 163–165.
Wrong Box, The, 153–155.

Young Folks, 126, 127.
Young, Robert, gardener, 45, 55.